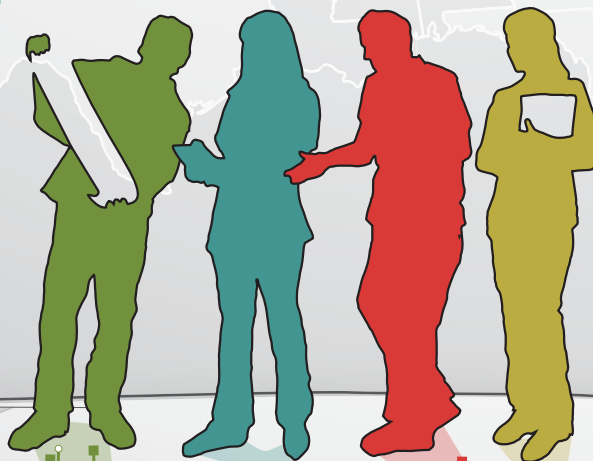
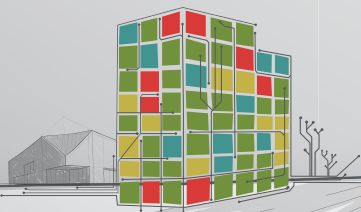
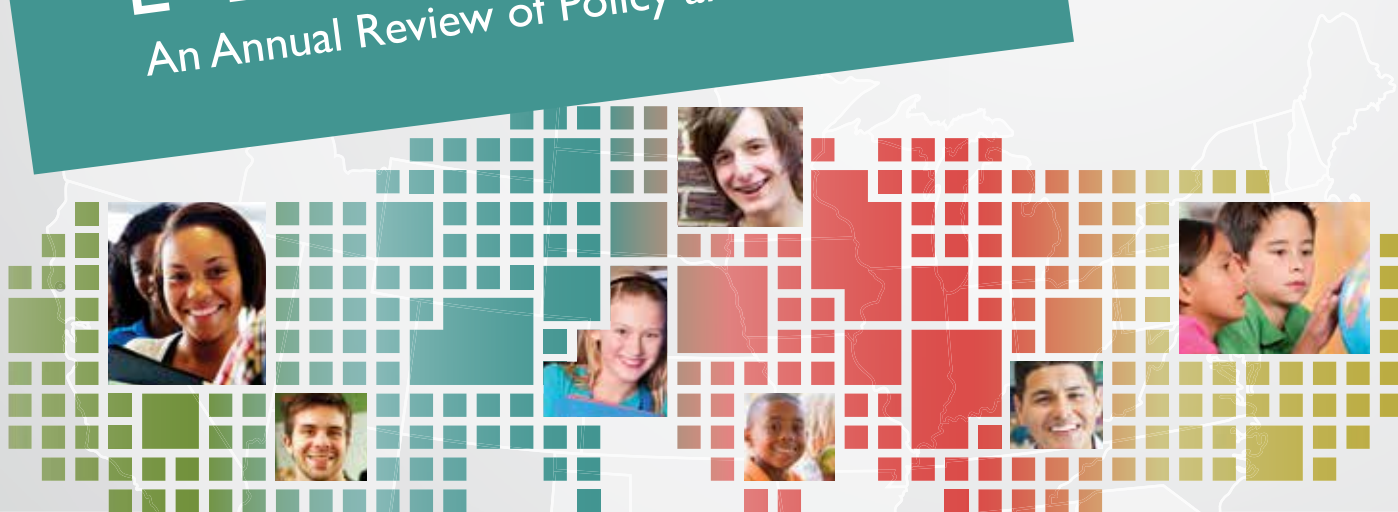


KEEPING PACE LEARNING

WITH K-12
ONLINE &
BLENDED

An Annual Review of Policy and Practice

2012



RESEARCH AND WRITING BY

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2012

KEEPING PACE WITH K-12 ONLINE & BLENDED LEARNING

An Annual Review of Policy and Practice

PROUDLY SPONSORED BY:



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Debbie Kenny and Mark Bucceri
The VHS Collaborative

Acknowledgments

This is the ninth annual *Keeping Pace* report. It is unlikely that when the study was first conceived anyone thought that it would be around nine years later, let alone develop to the point that it has. We are grateful to everyone who has helped along the way, including sponsors, researchers and writers, the schools and agencies across the country that provide the source information, and the people who write or call to tell us that *Keeping Pace* has helped. As the project has matured, the list of people and organizations involved has grown, and it has become increasingly difficult to acknowledge properly everyone who has been involved over the years.

Still, it is worth remembering that the first *Keeping Pace* was published in 2004, in response to a request for timely online education policy information from the Colorado Department of Education (CDE). Stevan Kalmon, then of the CDE, was a strong advocate for the project and was instrumental in its early development. The report originally was envisioned as a simple document that would be distributed only to the sponsoring organizations, but Cathy Gunn, then of the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory at Learning Point Associates, recognized the work's larger value and suggested, and then managed, publication and distribution to a wider audience. The four funding organizations in the first year were the CDE, Illinois Virtual High School (IVHS), Learning Point Associates, and Wisconsin Virtual School.

In 2005 *Keeping Pace* expanded to review all 50 states. The expansion to review the entire country was largely in response to the vision of Matthew Wicks, then of IVHS, who overcame the reluctance of the researchers faced with the daunting task of covering all states.

The cast of *Keeping Pace* sponsors evolves every year, with the only common thread being that they are educational organizations that share an interest in online and blended learning and that believe current policy and practice information should be available to practitioners and policymakers. Sponsors provide guidance and leadership in planning, research, analysis, and writing. *Keeping Pace* benefits from the involvement of these experienced and knowledgeable online learning practitioners and their organizations:

Adam Wade
and Kelly Schwirzke
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Allison Powell
and Matthew Wicks
International Association for
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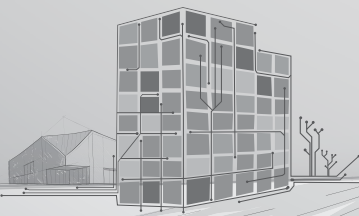
Todd Hitchcock
Pearson

The educators and policymakers who gave their time to provide the information for *Keeping Pace* are another set of key contributors to the report. We have been consistently surprised by the amount of time and quality of responses we receive from people around the country; this report would not be possible without their input.

We have made every attempt to ensure accuracy of the information in *Keeping Pace*, but we recognize that, in a report of this breadth, some errors of accuracy or omission are likely. We welcome comments, clarifications, and suggestions to john@evergreenedgroup.com.

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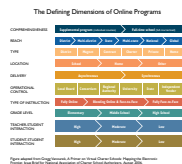
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Opening snapshot: K-12 online and blended learning in 2012

We provide here a snapshot of the K-12 online and blended learning landscape as of late 2012, along with suggestions for where to find more on these topics throughout this report.



Definitions p. 7 and State-level snapshot of online learning activity p. 14

Program Type	Program Description	Program Example
Single-District Programs	Programs operated by a single school district, often in partnership with private providers.	Florida Virtual School (FLVS) - Single-District Program
Multi-District Programs	Programs operated by multiple school districts, often in partnership with private providers.	Florida Virtual School (FLVS) - Multi-District Program
Statewide Programs	Programs operated by the state, often in partnership with private providers.	Florida Virtual School (FLVS) - Statewide Program

Single-district programs p. 20



Planning for quality p. 44

Issue	Policy	Practice
Accountability	States must have robust measures of student achievement and school performance.	States must invest in data systems, student tracking, and new accountability measures.
Investment	States must invest in data systems, student tracking, and new accountability measures.	States must invest in data systems, student tracking, and new accountability measures.
Partnerships	States must invest in data systems, student tracking, and new accountability measures.	States must invest in data systems, student tracking, and new accountability measures.

Key policy and practice issues p. 34

Four themes that *Keeping Pace 2011* introduced largely hold true a year later, with some updates for 2012:

Many states have created or allowed some online and blended learning opportunities, but no state has yet created or allowed a full range of online learning options for students—with one exception. Florida in 2012 has passed laws that, in theory at least, make a full range of supplemental and full-time online options available to all K-12 students. At the other end of the spectrum, in many states at least some students still have few or no online options; their educational opportunities continue to be determined by their zip code.

Innovators sometimes overlook the benefits, and challenges, of “traditional” online learning such as single online courses that are made available to students in physical schools. These courses and programs continue to deliver new opportunities to hundreds of thousands of students across the country. They are increasingly being offered by individual districts, often working in conjunction with private providers and/or public agencies such as state virtual schools.

Developing an online or blended program requires a high level of investment to be successful, or a willingness to work with an experienced partner. Expecting positive student results without the necessary investment is unrealistic. In the “Planning for quality” section we highlight key issues and suggest timelines for implementation under different program development scenarios.

States must invest in data systems, student tracking, and new accountability measures to ensure that online and blended learning provide both opportunities and positive outcomes, and that all stakeholders can accurately assess student and school performance. As of 2012, robust measures of student achievement do not exist in most states.

Beyond these themes, discussion of the landscape in late 2012 can be divided into categories of growth, important developments, and trends to watch for in 2012-13.

Growth and numbers

More students are taking online and blended courses than ever before, but because so many of these students are in programs that are not tracked the exact number is unknown. Some segments are better known than others. We estimate 275,000 students attended fully online schools in SY 2011-12, however, growth has slowed somewhat. There are only two new states allowing fully online schools in SY 2012-13 for a total of 31 states. The annual increase in the number of students attending these schools in the largest states is typically hovering around 15%.

We count 619,847 course enrollments (one student taking a one-semester-long online course) in 28 state virtual schools in SY 2011-12, an increase of 16% since last year. Further, we see state virtual schools continuing to diverge into those that are large and growing, and those that are small and may be fading—and for the first time some that are closing (Kentucky, Nebraska, and Tennessee).

Blended schools, and blended programs in districts, are again a fast-growing and high-profile segment. This is the first year our subtitle explicitly includes blended learning. At the same time, the actual number of students in these programs is less understood than in fully online schools or state virtual schools because it is not yet reported in a discrete and consistent way. We estimate perhaps two-thirds of districts are offering some online or blended program, and the large majority have relatively few students and rely on external course providers.

The total number of students taking part in all of these programs is unknown, but is likely several million, or slightly more than 5% of the total K-12 student population across the United States. We stress, however, that we estimate this by triangulating from close to a dozen sources. No single source is comprehensive.

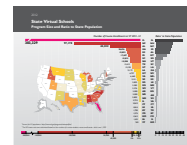
Important developments in 2012

New laws and policies are being created and implemented at a dizzying pace. These policy changes are among the key developments in 2012, but by no means the only ones. Beyond the spread of online courses and schools, among the significant developments in the past year are:

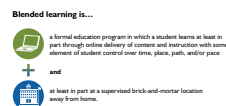
Provisions to allow students to choose online courses from multiple providers are being implemented in about a half-dozen states. By the end of SY 2012-13 we will be seeing the first results.



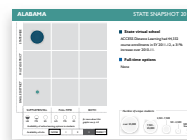
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State virtual schools p. 29



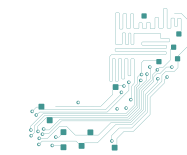
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State profiles p. 64



Student choice at the course level p. 37



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BLENDED

Full-time blended schools p. 23

Established blended school providers Rocketship Education and Carpe Diem Schools are moving into new states, and experienced providers of fully online schools are opening new blended schools. Given that there is likely a limit to the number of students who want to attend a fully online school, we expect blended schools to be an area of considerable growth and innovation in the near future.

States continue to consider, and in some cases pass, online learning high school graduation requirements. In some instances the states appear to be weakening the requirements, making it easier for students to meet the requirement.

The spread of the Common Core State Standards is helping online course providers who operate across many states, and the growing focus and expectations around the national assessment consortia PARCC (Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers) and Smarter Balanced are pushing schools and states to evaluate their technology infrastructure. Both of these will ease the way for additional online and blended course implementations.

Common Core and national assessments are not discussed in detail in the report, but we anticipate addressing them in future reports or on our blog at www.kpk12.com.

What to watch for in 2013

Because developments in online and blended learning are difficult to predict, *Keeping Pace* puts a heavier emphasis on what happened in the 2011-12 school year than on predicting the future. Still, several trends and developments will be worth watching in 2013.

One of these will be what happens in states that are considering allowing fully online schools but have not yet done so, such as Maine, North Carolina, and New Jersey, and states that have limited fully online schools, such as New Hampshire, Arkansas, and Virginia. In 2013 we may see a significant slowing of the spread of fully online schools, and political activities in these states will be an early indication.

We will also be watching for the growth of new blended schools. This may take the form of further expansion of charter schools managed by organizations such as Rocketship, Carpe Diem, Connections, or K12 Inc., or it may be based on new organizations or new independent blended schools. Further growth in this category may spur increased activity by individual school districts, state virtual schools, intermediate districts, and other public education agencies.

These changes will be reflected in next year's version of Table 1: State-level snapshot of online learning activity. We will be watching to see the progress in expanding more opportunities, to more students, across more states.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly but not easily reflected in a single table or image, we will be assessing how well state accountability and data systems are able to capture student outcomes. This will undoubtedly be a multi-year process, but we are hopeful that we will see noteworthy advances in 2013, with the goals that students will have expanding opportunities in online and blended learning, and these schools and courses will show improved quality based on student outcomes.

K-12 online and blended learning definitions

This section is primarily for readers relatively new to online learning, as it reviews the basic elements of teaching and learning in online and blended formats. It also provides definitions used in the report, while explaining the main categories of online programs highlighted in *Keeping Pace*. For a longer list of defined terms, see “The Online Learning Definitions Project,” published by iNACOL in October 2011.¹

Many terms in the field—such as online learning, blended learning, hybrid learning, elearning, virtual schools, and cyberschools—do not have commonly understood definitions. A complicating factor for a study that reports on state laws and publications from across the country is that many source documents use terms without defining them. *Keeping Pace* primarily uses the terms that we define in this section, but we also use terminology employed by various source documents when we are referencing states or sources and worry that switching to our preferred terms will create confusion.

Online learning is teacher-led education that takes place over the Internet, with the teacher and student separated geographically, using a web-based educational delivery system that includes software to provide a structured learning environment. It may be synchronous (communication in which participants interact in real time, such as online video) or asynchronous (communication separated by time, such as email or online discussion forums). It may be accessed from multiple settings (in school and/or out of school buildings).

Supplemental online programs provide a small number of courses to students who are enrolled in a school separate from the online program.

Fully online schools,² also called cyberschools, work with students who are enrolled primarily (often only) in the online school. Cyberschools typically are responsible for their students’ scores on state assessments. In some states, most full-time online schools are charter schools.

For **blended learning**, we are using the Innosight Institute definition: “A formal education program in which a student learns at least in part through online delivery of content and instruction with some element of student control over time, place, path, and/or pace, and at least in part at a supervised brick-and-mortar location away from home.”³

¹ *iNACOL Online Learning Definitions Project*, released October 2011. Available at <http://www.inacol.org/research/bookstore/detail.php?id=27>

² In past years we have called these “full-time online schools” instead of “fully online schools.” We have made the change to distinguish these fully online schools from blended learning schools.

³ *Classifying K-12 Blended Learning*, Innosight Institute, May 2012, retrieved August 25, 2012 from <http://www.innosightinstitute.org/innosight/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/Classifying-K-12-blended-learning2.pdf>

Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are found throughout this report.

ADA

Average daily attendance

ADM

Average daily membership

BOCES

Board of Cooperative Educational Services

DOE

Department of Education

FTE

Full-time equivalent

FY

Fiscal year

LEA

Local education agency

LMS

Learning management system

MOU

Memo of understanding

OER

Open educational resources

PD

Professional development

PPR

Per-pupil revenue

RFP

Request for proposals

SEA

State education agency

SIS

Student information system

SY

School year

In our discussion of blended learning and blended schools in the section titled *The State of K-12 Online and Blended Learning 2012* we discuss and refine the definition of blended learning. Our description of blended schools (and Innosight's definition) includes some schools in which the content is online but most or all instruction occurs in the physical classroom.

The ways in which *Keeping Pace* counts student numbers for supplemental programs and full-time programs differ:

Course enrollments—one student in one semester-long course—are used to count student numbers in supplemental programs.

Student enrollments—defined as one year-long full-time equivalent (FTE) student—are used to count student numbers in fully online schools and blended schools.

School year (SY) 2011-12 enrollment numbers are the sum of summer 2011, fall 2011, and spring 2012 enrollments.

State virtual schools are created by legislation or by a state-level agency, and/or administered by a state education agency, and/or funded by a state appropriation or grant for the purpose of providing online learning opportunities across the state. (They also may receive federal or private foundation grants and often charge course fees to help cover costs.) Because online programs evolve, some programs are categorized as state virtual schools but do not currently fit the definition, though they may have done so at important stages of their development.

Some states draw a distinction between **single-district programs**, which serve students who reside within the district providing the online courses, and **multi-district programs**, which serve students from multiple districts. Single-district programs may serve a small number of students from outside the home district while retaining single-district status.

Dimensions of online and blended education programs

Online and blended schools and programs vary in many of their key elements. A set of the defining dimensions of online programs, represented in Figure 1,⁴ describes whether the program is supplemental or full time; the breadth of its geographic reach; the organizational type and operational control; and location and type of instruction. Some of these attributes may be combined or operate along a continuum (e.g., location and type of instruction).

The Defining Dimensions of Online Programs

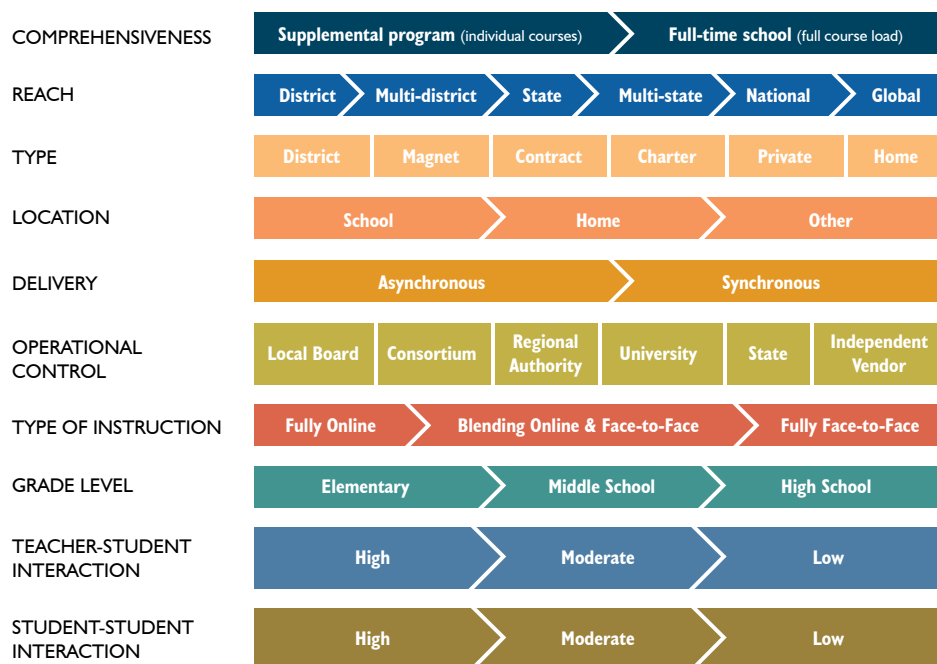


Figure adapted from Gregg Vanourek, A Primer on Virtual Charter Schools: Mapping the Electronic Frontier, Issue Brief for National Association of Charter School Authorizers, August 2006.

Figure 1: Defining dimensions of online programs

As online learning evolves into new models that include blended learning, personalized instruction, portable and mobile learning, and computer-based instruction (CBI), other defining dimensions come into play as well. The level of instruction that includes online components may be a lesson, a single course, or an entire school. A course that includes online instruction may expand learning beyond the school day or school year, or it still may be defined by classroom hours. The roles of teachers and students may be quite similar to their roles in a typical classroom, or they may change dramatically as learning becomes student-centered.

⁴ Defining dimensions of online programs. Figure adapted from Gregg Vanourek, A Primer on Virtual Charter Schools: Mapping the Electronic Frontier, Issue Brief for National Association of Charter School Authorizers, August 2006.

Notable reports from 2012

The following list highlights some of the reports that are among the most valuable for online and blended learning policymakers and practitioners. The list is not meant to be comprehensive.



The Broadband Imperative: Recommendations to Address K-12 Education Infrastructure Needs

State Educational Technology Directors Association (SETDA)
May 2012

This report examines current trends driving the need for more broadband access in teaching, learning, and school operations; provides state and district examples of the impact of robust deployment of broadband; and offers specific recommendations for the broadband capacity needed to ensure all students have access to the tools and resources they need to be college- and career-ready. (Description is from the SETDA press release.) www.setda.org/web/guest/broadbandimperative



Project Tomorrow

Personalizing the Classroom Experience—Teachers, Librarians and Administrators Connect the Dots with Digital Learning
Speak Up 2011 National Findings

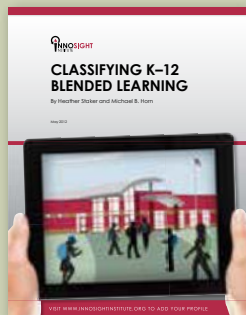
May 2012



Learning in the 21st Century: A 5 Year Retrospective on the Growth in Online Learning

June 2012

Project Tomorrow is a California-based NGO that, among other projects, runs the Speak Up National Research Project that surveys K-12 students, parents, and educators every year about online and blended learning and the role of technology in education. These two studies report on the 2012 survey findings and provide a historical view of online learning. Both reports are available at: www.tomorrow.org/speakup/speakup_reports.html.



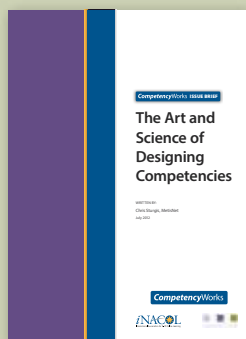
Classifying K-12 Blended Learning

Innosight Institute

May 2012

Authors Heather Staker and Michael Horn follow up on their 2011 “Rise of K-12 Blended Learning” with a new report that refines their definition of blended learning, further explains and gives examples of blended learning models, and eliminates two of the six blended learning models from the 2011 report.

www.innosightinstitute.org/innosight/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/Classifying-K-12-blended-learning2.pdf



The Art and Science of Designing Competencies

A CompetencyWorks Issue Brief

International Association for K-12 Online Learning

July 2012

This report is the first in a series of issue briefs from CompetencyWorks, a collaborative initiative of iNACOL and MetisNet. It explores how innovators in competency education develop competencies. It discusses insights and lessons learned on how to build powerful competencies, engage teachers, and integrate lifelong learning competencies.

www.competencyworks.org/resources/briefing-papers/



Understanding the Implications of Online Learning for Educational Productivity

U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Technology

January 2012

This report, prepared for the U.S. Department of Education by SRI International, provides guidance to educators creating online learning programs for secondary schools. It suggests that online learning can lower education costs by making better use of teacher and student time, using home or community spaces in addition to traditional school buildings, and through the reuse and large-scale distribution of materials. It also finds that online learning programs may have higher start-up costs associated with equipment and curriculum development compared to traditional instruction. This description comes from the press release.

www.sri.com/newsroom/press-releases/sri-international-releases-report-us-department-education-costs-and-benefits

The state of K-12 online and blended learning in 2012

This section explores the state of online learning in the summary state table (Table 1), and in seven subsequent sections on blended learning, single-district programs, full-time blended schools, multi-district fully online schools, consortium programs, state virtual schools, and postsecondary programs.

This section reviews seven categories of online and blended learning: blended learning, single-district programs, full-time blended schools, multi-district fully online schools, consortium programs, state virtual schools, and postsecondary programs.

Single-district online programs are created by a district primarily for students within that district. While they may be fully online, most provide supplemental online courses for students enrolled full-time in the district and accessing most of their courses in a physical school. Single-district programs are the fastest-growing segment of both online and blended learning.

Multi-district fully online schools are the main education providers for their students, who do not need to go to a physical school to access any aspect of their education (although they may do so). This section of *Keeping Pace* focuses on fully online schools that operate across multiple school districts and often draw students from an entire state.

State virtual schools are created by legislation or by a state-level agency. They are often, but not always, administered by a state education agency and funded by a state appropriation or grant to provide online learning opportunities to students across the state. They also may receive federal or private foundation grants, and they sometimes charge course fees to help cover operating costs.¹

Consortium online programs often are developed by districts, education service agencies, or intermediate service units that wish to create efficiencies by combining resources. They usually serve students from multiple districts that join the consortium.

Postsecondary programs include many private pay options, but this report focuses on programs working with school districts to provide publicly funded options to students.

Online learning activity by state

Table 1 presents all 50 states rated in six categories of online learning activity: fully online and supplemental online options for high school, middle school, and elementary school students.

¹ Readers who have reviewed *Keeping Pace* reports in past years may note that we have dropped the “state-led initiative” category. While many of these programs still exist, they are diverging in form and function to the point where we no longer feel that they fit into one category. In particular, lines are blurring between those state efforts providing tools and resources to schools or students, those playing a regulatory role over private providers, and those mixing both roles.

For each category, we assigned one of four ratings:

- Available to all students across the state
- Available to most, but not all, students across the state
- Available to some, but not most, students across the state
- Available to few or no students across the state

Ratings are based on the expected availability of online learning options to students of all grade levels in all geographic areas of the state during the 2012-13 school year. Availability is, in turn, based on the existence and attributes of programs, state policy, funding, and the proportion of the student population that took part in online courses and schools during the 2011-12 school year. Blended learning programs that rely on students being in a specific physical school are not included in the assessment because, by definition, these programs are not available to all students across the state, with some exceptions for large blended programs in sizeable districts if they have a measurable impact on the proportion of students in the state who have access to blended learning opportunities.

The rating for each category in each state is based on a mix of objective metrics and subjective determinations. Several factors were taken into account. First and foremost, we asked the question:

If students (or their parents) from anywhere in the state are seeking a publicly funded online course or fully online school, how likely is it that they will have access to these opportunities?

The primary question was then subdivided into several subquestions:

1. Do fully online schools or supplemental online programs exist?
2. If such schools and programs exist, are they available to students across the entire state, or are they restricted by location or other factors? In particular, is their total enrollment limited at a level below demand, either explicitly by a cap on enrollments or students, or implicitly by funding constraints?
3. Does the decision to participate in online learning primarily rest with the student and parent, or do individual school districts control the decision?
4. Are there other potential barriers, such as enrollment fees, that would discourage some students from participating?

We answered these questions based on the existence and attributes of programs and policies, including funding of online schools and courses. We also recognize that our knowledge of policies is imperfect, so we looked at the size of online schools and programs relative to the state's school-age population as a way of determining whether barriers might exist of which we are unaware. The percentage of the school-age population that is taking part in online learning in a handful of states with well-known and successful online schools (e.g., Florida and Alabama) created a benchmark against which other states were compared.

We also looked for evidence of significant district programs that provide options beyond state virtual schools and fully online charter schools. In cases where the presence and size of district programs would shift a state's rating, we researched district programs in more detail.

Any summary rating system must balance the competing needs of accurately describing as many data points as possible with keeping the number of categories and ratings low enough to be meaningful. States with significant online programs that are not available across all grades or locations were particularly challenging. An empty circle does not necessarily mean there are no online learning opportunities in the state in that category. It does suggest that, if such options exist, they are restricted to a very small percentage of the student population.

Table 1: State-level Snapshot of Online Learning Activity

Ratings are based on the expected availability of online learning options to students of all grade levels in all geographic areas of the state for the 2012-13 school year. Availability is, in turn, based on the existence and attributes of programs, state policy, and funding, and the proportion of the student population that took part in online courses and schools during the 2011-12 school year.

● Available to all students ● Available to most but not all ○ Available to some but not most ○ Not available

State	SUPPLEMENTAL			FULL-TIME			
	High School (grades 9–12)	Middle School (grades 6–8)	Elementary School (grades K–5)	High School (grades 9–12)	Middle School (grades 6–8)	Elementary School (grades K–5)	
Alabama	●	○	○	○	○	○	The state virtual school, ACCESS, had the third most course enrollments among state virtual schools in the country. AL has an online learning graduation requirement, and HB165 (2012) calls for tablet devices and etextbooks for all grade 9-12 students and teachers.
Alaska	○	○	○	●	○	○	Alaska's Learning Network provides supplemental courses and is available to all districts in the state; few fully online schools.
Arizona	●	○	○	●	●	●	Arizona Online Instruction (AOI) program has approved 20 online charter schools and 52 online district programs as of August 2012, providing a mix of fully online schools and supplemental online courses.
Arkansas	○	○	○	○	○	○	Arkansas Virtual High School is the state virtual school, and is part of the Arkansas Distance Learning Consortium. One full-time virtual charter school serves 500 students in grades K-8.
California	○	○	○	●	●	●	Many district and online charter schools, although restricted by contiguous counties requirement. Regional coordination by county offices and consortia.
Colorado	○	○	○	●	●	●	Colorado Online Learning is the state virtual school; 24 multi-district schools serve students statewide, and 27 single-district schools and programs exist.
Connecticut	○	○	○	○	○	○	Public Act (PA) No. 10-111 (2010) allowed online learning to be used for credit and required all districts with a dropout rate of 8% or higher to establish an online credit recovery program.
Delaware	○	○	○	○	○	○	New online world language program for 1,200 7 th grade students in SY 2012-13 offered by the DOE. State virtual school, which operated for 18 months, lost funding after 2008-09 school year. No other major programs.
Florida	●	●	●	●	●	●	Florida is the first state to provide full- and part-time options to all students in grades K-12. FLVS is the largest state virtual school in the country; it served 303,329 course enrollments in SY 2011-12.
Georgia	●	○	○	●	●	●	2012 laws reshaped the online learning landscape, requiring all districts to provide full- and part-time online options for students grades 3-12 and increasing funding for virtual charters. Georgia Virtual School served 20,876 course enrollments.
Hawaii	○	○	○	○	○	○	Hawaii Virtual Learning Network is responsible for expanding online offerings throughout the state and includes the state virtual school. There is also one full-time charter school for high school students, and two for middle and elementary schools.
Idaho	○	○	○	●	●	●	Large state virtual school, several fully online charter schools, and some district programs give students a range of options. Student choice of online courses being implemented.
Illinois	○	○	○	○	○	○	Illinois Virtual School is the state virtual school; three blended learning schools in Chicago and one full-time online charter school with limitations on enrollment.
Indiana	○	○	○	●	●	●	Several statewide supplemental programs, growing number of virtual and hybrid options for students after HB1002 (2011) ended virtual pilots and allowed virtual charter schools.

● Available to all students ● Available to most but not all ○ Available to some but not most ○ Not available

State	SUPPLEMENTAL			FULL-TIME			
	High School (grades 9–12)	Middle School (grades 6–8)	Elementary School (grades K–5)	High School (grades 9–12)	Middle School (grades 6–8)	Elementary School (grades K–5)	
Iowa	○	○	○	○	○	○	Iowa Learning Online and Iowa Online AP Academy are the state virtual schools offering supplemental courses. The first two fully online schools opened fall 2012.
Kansas	●	●	○	●	●	●	51 district, service center, and charter school programs provide online courses; some of these schools serve students statewide.
Kentucky	○	○	○	○	○	○	The state transitioned its state virtual school, Kentucky Virtual Schools, from being a course provider to serving as a source of information for distance programs and students. JCPeSchool is one of the largest district programs in the country.
Louisiana	●	●	○	●	●	●	Louisiana Virtual School served 9,179 course enrollments; the first two virtual charters opened in SY 2011-12.
Maine	○	○	○	○	○	○	Maine Online Learning Program approved 3 providers, no other major programs. Online charter schools being studied for SY 2013-14.
Maryland	○	○	○	○	○	○	State initiative provides online services to districts, and MSDE must approve all online courses; district activity has increased. SB674 (2012) sets requirements for the review and approval of online courses.
Massachusetts	○	○	○	○	○	○	MassONE is a state-led initiative supporting blended learning; 64% of middle and high schools participate in The VHS Collaborative. Districts allowed to open statewide virtual schools for the first time in SY 2010-11, with significant enrollment limits.
Michigan	●	○	○	●	○	○	The state virtual school, Michigan Virtual School, is taking on new roles in educational innovation. SB619 (2012) significantly expands full-time cyber school options. GenNET is a large consortium program with about 400 participating districts.
Minnesota	●	●	○	●	●	●	Many online charter school and district programs offering part- and full-time options; 30 providers authorized by the Department of Education.
Mississippi	○	○	○	○	○	○	Mississippi Virtual Public School is the state virtual school; no other major programs.
Missouri	○	○	○	○	○	○	State virtual school, Missouri Virtual Instruction Program (MoVIP), enrolls both part- and full-time students, but lost most of its funding in middle of SY 2009-10 and is primarily on a tuition model; there has been a 90% enrollment decrease.
Montana	●	○	○	○	○	○	Montana Digital Academy, the state virtual school, served 6,797 course enrollments in SY 2011-12. A few small district supplemental programs exist.
Nebraska	○	○	○	○	○	○	The Nebraska Virtual/Hybrid Initiative offers courses to grades 3-12; Omaha Public Schools and other district programs.
Nevada	●	○	○	●	●	●	26 charter schools and district programs approved to offer distance education programs, including Clark County. State board has defined seat-time alternatives.
New Hampshire	●	○	○	○	○	○	The Virtual Learning Academy Charter School provides primarily supplemental courses for grades 6-12, and served 100 full-time students in grades 9-12; it acts as de facto state virtual school.
New Jersey	○	○	○	○	○	○	Few online options in the state: Monmouth Ocean Educational Services Commission, NJeSchool, The VHS Collaborative. The first two blended charters opened in SY 2012-13.
New Mexico	○	○	○	○	○	○	IDEAL-New Mexico is the state virtual school; some district programs including Albuquerque Public Schools' eCADEMY and one full-time virtual charter that opened in SY 2012-13.
New York	○	○	○	○	○	○	A few online programs through BOCES. iLearnNYC provides online and blended options in New York City; Board of Regents eased seat-time and face-to-face requirements in 2011.

● Available to all students ● Available to most but not all ○ Available to some but not most ○ Not available

State	SUPPLEMENTAL			FULL-TIME			
	High School (grades 9–12)	Middle School (grades 6–8)	Elementary School (grades K–5)	High School (grades 9–12)	Middle School (grades 6–8)	Elementary School (grades K–5)	
North Carolina	●	○	○	○	○	○	North Carolina Virtual Public School has the second highest number of enrollments of any state virtual school (97,170 in SY 2011-12); no full-time virtual charter schools.
North Dakota	○	○	○	○	○	○	North Dakota Center for Distance Education provides self-paced and scheduled courses to middle and high school students in state and out of state.
Ohio	○	○	○	●	●	●	27 e-schools; HB153 (2011) lifted the moratorium on new e-schools. iLearnOhio is a state-led initiative.
Oklahoma	○	○	○	●	●	●	Three statewide full-time online schools in SY 2012-13; two university supplemental programs.
Oregon	○	○	○	○	○	○	Eight virtual charters and additional district programs served 5,577 students in SY 2011-12. Oregon Virtual School District supports blended learning statewide; several district programs.
Pennsylvania	○	○	○	●	●	●	16 cyber charters operating in 2012-13 with 32,322 students; four new cyber charters approved to operate in 2012-13. Many district programs opening in response to cyber charter funding rules, many of which partner with BlendedSchools.net.
Rhode Island	○	○	○	○	○	○	Northern Rhode Island Collaborative offers 80 online courses to grades 3-12; 15% of middle and high schools participate in The VHS Collaborative; little other activity.
South Carolina	○	○	○	●	●	●	South Carolina Virtual School is state virtual school; six full-time charter schools and some district programs.
South Dakota	○	○	○	○	○	○	South Dakota Virtual School is a consortium of course providers approved by the State Department of Education. There are also a statewide virtual alternative school and statewide programs that focus on career and technical education and advanced courses.
Tennessee	○	○	○	○	○	○	e4TN, the state virtual school, was defunded for SY 2011-12; some district programs including Hamilton County and one fully online statewide school.
Texas	○	○	○	○	○	○	Texas Virtual School Network (TxVSN) served 12,419 course enrollments in SY 2011-12. TxVSN Online Schools allows for fully online schools serving grades 3-12 operated both by charters and independent school districts; it served 6,209 students in SY 2011-12.
Utah	○	○	○	●	●	●	Four fully online statewide schools, two of which opened in 2011. SB65 (2011) expanded part- and full-time options. Utah Electronic High School was among the first state virtual schools in the country.
Vermont	○	○	○	○	○	○	State virtual school opened in 2010; 31% of high schools participate in The VHS Collaborative.
Virginia	○	○	○	○	○	○	Virtual Virginia is the state virtual school; some district programs; 18 multi-district providers are approved for SY 2012-13.
Washington	○	○	○	●	●	●	There are a total of 36 approved providers including 17 online course providers, 14 program providers, and 18 online school programs.
West Virginia	○	○	○	○	○	○	West Virginia Virtual School is state virtual school utilizing third-party course providers and local teacher facilitators. Few other options exist.
Wisconsin	○	○	○	●	●	●	Wisconsin Virtual School and the Wisconsin eSchool Network, a consortium of 15 districts, comprise the Wisconsin Digital Learning Collaborative, the state virtual school. 28 online charters are authorized to operate in SY 2012-13.
Wyoming	○	○	○	●	●	●	Wyoming Switchboard Network coordinates distance learning for K-12 full-time and supplemental options statewide; several district programs.

Blended learning

Blended learning is not a category analogous to the other categories in this section of *Keeping Pace* (district programs, state virtual schools, etc.), but we open the landscape discussion with a review of blended learning because it is an important factor across most of the categories. In subsequent sections, we describe blended schools, as well as consortium and district programs, both of which often have a blended learning component.

The first and perhaps most important point to make about blended learning is that this discussion builds on the work being done by the Innosight Institute. Although we reproduce some of Innosight's ideas and figures here, while adding some thoughts of our own, the reader, if not already familiar with them, should take a detour from *Keeping Pace* to review Innosight's reports *The Rise of K-12 Blended Learning*² and *Classifying K-12 Blended Learning*.³

Innosight defines blended learning as:

Blended learning is...



a formal education program in which a student learns at least in part through online delivery of content and instruction with some element of student control over time, place, path, and/or pace



and



at least in part at a supervised brick-and-mortar location away from home.

Figure 2: Innosight Institute's definition of blended learning
Source: Classifying K-12 Blended Learning, Innosight Institute

Keeping Pace uses Innosight's definition of blended learning. Although we have heard concerns about aspects of the definition—mostly based on the desire to build a measure of quality into the definition—we have not yet seen a better alternative.

The main reason we like this definition is because of what it defines out; i.e., not within the definition of blended learning, including all sorts of educational technology applications that are layered onto a classroom or school without changing the instructional model. The funds spent on educational technology in previous decades have paved the way for blended and online learning implementations by providing the boxes and wires that make online instruction possible, but improved student outcomes have not yet been clearly demonstrated in many of these cases.⁴

Although we like the definition, we also believe further description can be useful, and the key element we like to see described in a blended learning model is a way in which students' online work generates data that are used by the instructional system—teacher, technology, or both—to personalize and improve instruction for each student.

² Michael B. Horn and Heather Staker, *The Rise of K-12 Blended Learning*, (Innosight Institute, Charter School Growth Fund, and Public Impact, January 2011), <http://www.innosightinstitute.org/media-room/publications/education-publications/the-rise-of-k-12-blended-learning/>

³ Heather Staker and Michael B. Horn, *Classifying K-12 Blended Learning*, (Innosight Institute, May 2012), <http://www.innosightinstitute.org/innosight/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/Classifying-K-12-blended-learning2.pdf>

⁴ We don't mean to suggest that schools and classrooms are adequately wired; in fact the lack of broadband Internet access in many areas is a key concern for online and blended learning.

With that in mind, we see the three key elements of a blended program as:

1. A meaningful online component, using online content and a learning management system (LMS), or similar technology, that allows students to work with an element of control over time, place, path, or pace⁵;
2. A significant, supervised, onsite component that includes face-to-face instruction or mentoring; and
3. A technology system that captures and reports student data in a way that allows the teacher and/or other adults involved in instruction to personalize learning to each student.

Blended learning models

Innosight defines and describes a series of blended learning models as shown in Figure 3. Note that these models can be at a course level or at a school level. We discuss full-time blended schools in more detail on p. 23.

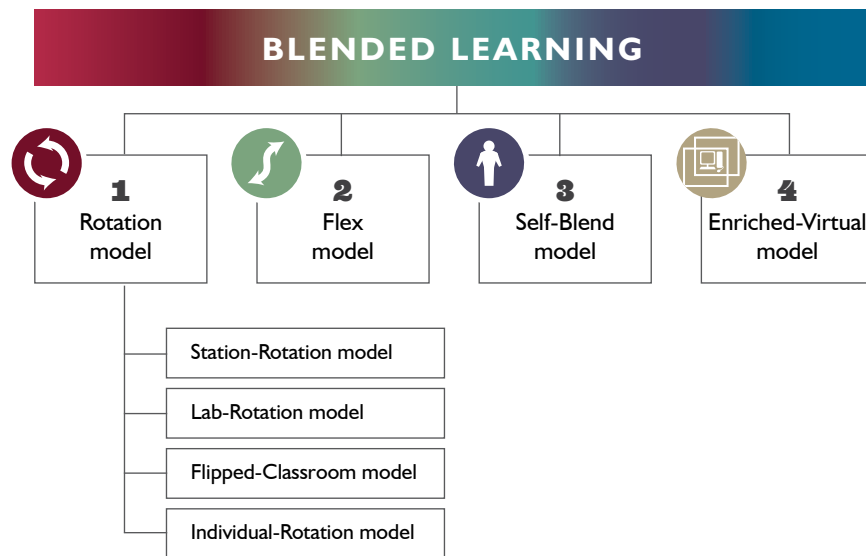


Figure 3: Blended learning models. Source: Innosight Institute

The rotation model is “a program in which within a given course or subject (e.g., math), students rotate on a fixed schedule or at the teacher’s discretion between learning modalities, at least one of which is online learning.”

The flex model is “a program in which content and instruction are delivered primarily by the Internet, students move on an individually customized, fluid schedule among learning modalities, and the teacher-of-record is on-site.”

The self-blend model “describes a scenario in which students choose to take one or more courses entirely online to supplement their traditional courses and the teacher-of-record is the online teacher.”

The enriched-virtual model is a “whole-school experience in which within each course (e.g., math), students divide their time between attending a brick-and-mortar campus and learning remotely using online delivery of content and instruction.”⁶

⁵ Note that this element includes online content but does not have to include online teaching. Some blended schools have nearly all teaching take place in a physical classroom, but have enough content online, and capture data from students’ interaction with the online content, to qualify as blended.

⁶ Heather Staker and Michael B. Horn, *Classifying K-12 Blended Learning*, (Innosight Institute, May 2012), <http://www.innosightinstitute.org/innosight/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/Classifying-K-12-blended-learning2.pdf>

From models to implementation

The models are valuable for *describing* types of blended learning, but not necessarily for *planning* blended programs.

This point is important because educators too often ask, “which model should we implement?” and policymakers too often ask, “which model should we support in legislation (or rule)?” There is no good and simple answer to those educators or policymakers, because no blended learning model has been shown to be more effective than others. Each can be implemented well or poorly, and any of the models might be a good match for any particular school.

The appropriate answer to the educator is, in fact, a question: What educational goals are you trying to meet? Answering that question will eventually assist in defining the most suitable model or models (Figure 4).

The appropriate response to the policymaker is: Rather than picking a model to support or, alternatively, to hinder, why not remove barriers to experimenting. This will allow educators to determine which approach is best for their students and schools.

The next two sections look at district programs, most of which are blended, and whole schools that are blended (and are often charter schools).

Which blended learning model should we choose?

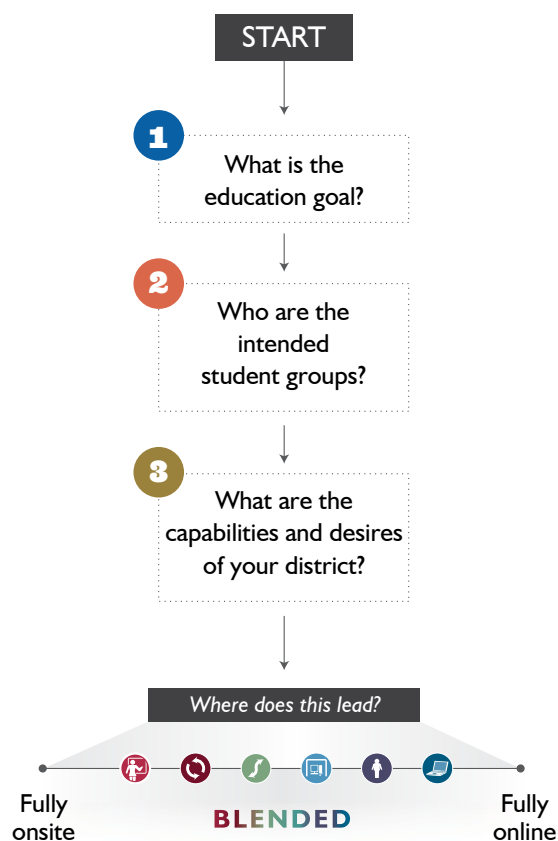


Figure 4: Choosing a blended learning model. Blended learning models describe program options, but educational goals (not models) should drive planning and decisions.

Resources related to blended learning:

Classifying K-12 Blended Learning, Innosight Institute, May 2012. Heather Staker and Michael B. Horn.

Lessons Learned from Blended Programs: Experiences and Recommendations from the Field, International Association for K-12 Online Learning, October 2012. Edited by Richard E. Ferdig, Cathy Cavanaugh, and Joseph R. Freidhoff.

Single-district programs

District blended and online programs—those created by a school district, entirely or primarily for that district’s students—are the largest and fastest-growing segment of blended and online learning. The numbers of programs and students, however, are not well known. In other categories of programs, data generally are more available because either 1) the schools are public schools that report data to the state and are identified as online (e.g., fully online charter schools); or 2) the number of programs is limited, so we are able to contact them directly (e.g., state virtual schools and large consortium programs). Neither of these has been true of district programs. In addition, most states do not require single-district programs to report online or blended learning enrollments any differently than they would report traditional classroom enrollments. This changes when a district is serving students outside of its district.

Since late 2011, however, the understanding of district programs has improved. In the past year, several studies have looked at distance learning nationally, or online and blended learning regionally. These studies have been done by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), the California Learning Resource Network (CLRN), the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB), and the Evergreen Education Group (for rural Colorado). Taken together, these reports paint a picture of activity across the country, even though each study has limitations.⁷

The NCES report,⁸ released in late 2011, offers a first look at data collected from 2,150 districts around the country from the 2009-10 school year. Key findings include:

- 55% of the 2,150 responding districts reported having students enrolled in distance education courses.
- Extrapolation from these districts suggests a total of 1.8 million course enrollments across the U.S.
- Growth has been rapid, up from 222,000 in the 2002-03 school year.
- These numbers are not just for online courses, because they include all distance courses. However, 90% of districts reported using Internet-delivered courses, and 77% of the districts reported that synchronous or asynchronous Internet-based courses were the primary delivery method for their distance education courses.
- 74% of the enrollments were in high school courses, 9% in middle school/junior high, and 4% in elementary school.
- The southeast region of the country was most likely to enroll students in distance education courses.
- 62% of districts reported having students enrolled in credit recovery distance education courses.
- A large percentage of districts reporting distance education enrollments have few students in distance courses. More than 50% of districts reported 30 enrollments or fewer, and more than 75% of districts reported 100 enrollments or fewer. It seems likely that most districts are not offering a comprehensive catalog of courses, but rather are meeting a specific need using a provider from outside the district.

Given that the data are three years old, the overall numbers are almost certainly higher, both in terms of total students taking online courses and the percentage of districts offering online

⁷ The main limitation is one that does not apply to the NCES study but is relevant to the others, all of which are based on voluntary responses to surveys. We believe that there is likely to be a response bias in surveys, because districts offering online or blended learning are more likely to respond to surveys that ask about these programs than districts that do not offer online and blended learning. We therefore put more weight on the NCES study, which had a far larger sample size and made a concerted effort to obtain responses from a subset of districts whether or not they offered distance education options.

⁸ Queen, B., and Lewis, L. (2011). *Distance Education Courses for Public Elementary and Secondary School Students: 2009–10* (NCES 2012-008), (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2011), <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2012/2012008.pdf>

options. Still, the NCES report is a valuable data set because it is among the very few studies that looked at a large sample of districts.

Findings from California and the SREB states suggest fairly similar numbers, especially when taking into account growth in the last three years. CLRN found that 46% of survey respondents were offering online or blended learning, and that another 29% were planning to implement online or blended options in the following year.⁹ Also, 24% of districts had fewer than 20 students in elearning courses, and the median number was 75 students. More districts offered high school options than middle school, while elementary school options were the least common.

In the southern United States, SREB reported¹⁰ a higher percentage of districts offering online and blended options—67%—but the smaller sample size and lower response rate suggest the possibility that a response bias skewed the numbers (districts with online and blended learning are more likely to respond). Similarly, the Colorado study¹¹ found a high percentage of districts offering online or blended learning, and that most districts had few students taking these courses.

The emerging picture

The numbers tell a story of many districts offering online or blended programs, but what do these programs look like up close?

We see the majority of districts offering some online and blended options, but in small online programs that serve a small number of students, most of whom are in one category (recovering credit, Advanced Placement, or dual credit); we estimate that about two-thirds of districts fall into this category. Most of these districts are using a single provider for their online courses, which may be a state virtual school or a private provider such as E2020, Apex Learning, or Aventa. The providers furnish course content, the LMS, and sometimes the teacher. Often one or more schools in the district have a learning lab with computers where students access the courses.

At one end of the spectrum are the relatively few districts that are offering a comprehensive set of online and blended courses to a significant percentage of the district's students. We estimate that less than 10% of all districts fall into this category. Examples in this category include Riverside (CA), Albuquerque, Nashville, and Wichita (described in Table 2).

Riverside is a good example of a district with comprehensive online and blended offerings. Riverside Virtual School (RVS) offers online and blended-learning programs within and beyond the Riverside Unified School District (RUSD), serving 1,727 course enrollments for full-time students (a 59% increase) and 2,958 supplemental course enrollments (a 46% increase), for a total of 4,685 course enrollments during SY 2011-12. RUSD is one of the few districts in the country that tracks blended learning enrollments. It reported 17,805 blended enrollments in SY 2011-12, an annual increase of 52%. In addition, RUSD has provided about 25,000 devices (tablets, netbooks, etc.) to students, reaching 57% of its student population, and has bring your own device and open access policies that allow the remaining students to bring technology to campus for use in and outside of the classroom.

At the other end of the spectrum are districts that are not yet offering significant online or blended courses. We estimate that about 25% of all districts fall into this category. Our experience suggests that these districts are not evenly spread around the country, but instead are concentrated in states that have neither a significant state virtual school nor online charter schools drawing students from all districts in the state; e.g., New Jersey, Maryland, Illinois, and Mississippi.

⁹ Dr. Kelly Schwirzke, Dr. Theresa Rouse, Brian Bridges, *California eLearning Census: Trending Past the Tipping Point* (Modesto, CA: California Learning Resource Network, 2012); http://www.clrn.org/census/eLearning_Census_Report.pdf

¹⁰ Holly Lynde, *Increasing Online Learning Options for K-12 Students: The Role of School Districts* (Southern Regional Education Board Educational Technology Cooperative, April 2012), http://www.sreb.org/cgi-bin/MySQLdb?VIEW=/public/docs/view_one.txt&docid=1786

¹¹ John Watson and Amy Murin, *Blended Learning in Rural Colorado: Status and Strategies for Expansion* (Evergreen, CO: Evergreen Education Group, 2012), http://www.cde.state.co.us/onlinelearning/download/RuralBlendedLearning_Evergreen.pdf

District	Models used	Details
Riverside Unified School District (CA) http://www.rusdlink.org/Domain/54	Self-blend, Rotation, Enriched Virtual, Fully online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One of the first comprehensive district programs combining fully online classes and face-to-face classes – students choose what works best for them. • Supplemental online resources available to all district students. • One-to-one and BYOD initiatives ensure all students have access to a computer. • Classes start at various times during the day; students don't have to be on campus if they don't need to be. • Students spend time at the Virtual School campus or on high school campuses doing hands-on, project-based activities in labs with the same curriculum as their traditional counterparts. • Many courses require face-to-face meetings, such as science courses that require wet labs.
Buena Vista School District (CO) http://old.bvschools.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=102&Itemid=126	Self-blend, Flex, Rotation, Fully online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students work with the director to “mix and match” online and brick-and-mortar options, including tutoring, lectures, field trips, and units. • Students can start on a traditional school calendar, or when ready. • Students can choose a self-paced or more traditional schedule. • Technology is embedded in all school district courses.
Nashville Public Schools, VLearn http://vlearn.mnps.org/site240.aspx	Rotation, Self-blend, Fully online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fully online school option for in-district students. • Virtual school also delivers fully online courses to an entire class of students in a brick-and-mortar school, • Or to a one-off student who is self-blending off campus. • Grades 7-12, all courses. • Blended models served 500 students in 2010-11.
Mesa Distance Learning Program (AZ) http://www.mdlp.org	Self-blend, Fully online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11,953 part-time students in grades 7-12 and 988 full-time students in grades K-12 in SY 2011-12. • Part-time students can take up to three fully online courses with Mesa to supplement their brick-and-mortar education. • Courses include credit recovery, dual enrollment, core, and electives.
Stillwater Area Public Schools, Stillwater (MN) http://moodle.stillwater.k12.mn.us/	Rotation, Fully online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students in grades 4–6 math classes use Internet-connected devices after school at the location of their choice to watch 10- to 15-minute asynchronous instruction videos and complete comprehension questions on Moodle. At school they practice and apply their learning with a face-to-face teacher. • K-12, professional development, and community enrichment courses available online. • All new students take an online orientation.
Albuquerque eCADEMY (NM) http://www.aps.edu/schools/schools/ecademy/	Enriched virtual, Fully online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students meet face-to-face for first course meeting, then can choose to complete coursework remotely if they maintain a “C” GPA. • Face-to-face supplements instruction primarily delivered remotely. • Significant dropout recovery/prevention and adult learner programs. • Use courses from state virtual school, IDEAL-NM.
Solanco Cyber Academy (PA) http://www.solancosd.org/?page_id=93	Fully online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fully online school option for students in grades K-12. • Courses taught by in-district teachers. • Students earn a Solanco school district diploma.

Table 2: Example school districts offering online and blended courses. These examples/models come from the Innosight Institute’s paper, *The Rise of K-12 Blended Learning: Profiles of Emerging Models* (http://www.innosightinstitute.org/media-room/publications/education-publications/blended_learning_models/), as well as *Keeping Pace* research.

Full-time blended schools

Full-time blended schools are an increasingly important category of online learning activity. These are often charter schools, although they may be non-charter district schools that take a whole-school blended approach to instruction. Consistent with the blended learning definition that *Keeping Pace* uses (discussed on p. 17), these schools have an element of student control over time/pace/path/place and in one or more ways change the instructional model away from one-to-many (teacher to students) instruction and toward a personalized, data-driven approach.

Data for the blended schools category as a whole are not available, because such schools are typically not recognized as a group in state reporting. In some cases, a blended program may be a school within a school, without its own school code and without its data being disaggregated from the larger school. Examples of some of the more prominent blended schools, and others that recently have been created and launched, include the following.

- Rocketship Education is among the best known management organizations running blended schools. Rocketship runs seven schools in the San Jose, California, region, is planning to open a cluster of schools in the Milwaukee area in fall 2013, and has a goal of opening schools in 50 cities across the country, eventually serving a million students.¹² The blended learning aspect of Rocketship (which it calls the Learning Lab) is just one of three key components of its instructional model (as reported by Rocketship itself).¹³ The other two elements are “talented teachers” and “empowered parents.” The Learning Lab, which uses online instructional materials, generates student data consistently throughout the school year, and students are formally assessed every eight weeks. Rocketship has shown successful results, based on student outcomes generally¹⁴ and in terms of the Learning Lab.¹⁵ In Rocketship schools students spend 25% of their day in the Learning Lab and the rest of the day in classrooms with certified teachers.
- Carpe Diem manages a blended school that serves grades 6-12 in Yuma, Arizona, and an online school with four support centers in the Phoenix metropolitan area. Students attend a brick-and-mortar campus four days each week. Similar to Rocketship, it also is expanding to a new state for the first time. In early 2012, it received approval from the Indiana Charter Schools Board to open six schools in Indiana. The first two opened for school year 2012-13: the Carpe Diem Meridian Campus in Indianapolis, with on-site teacher-facilitators and a web-based learning and management system, and Carpe Diem Online. Both schools are for grades 6-12.
- Nexus Academy is a set of blended schools developed and run by Connections Education, which runs Connections Academy online schools and is part of Pearson Education. Nexus schools, which are college prep high schools limited to 300 students, opened in fall 2012 in Cleveland, Columbus, Toledo, Lansing, and Grand Rapids, with further expansion anticipated in 2013. Similar to Carpe Diem, Nexus has students attend the physical school for less than a full school schedule (mornings or afternoons, four days each week), while accessing online courses during other times throughout the week. As with some other blended schools, Nexus campuses do not look like a traditional school, with learning labs and open work spaces replacing classrooms.

¹² Rocketship Education, <http://www.rsed.org/about/Our-Story.cfm>

¹³ Unless otherwise noted the descriptions of Rocketship are from the FAQ on its website; retrieved August 15, 2012, http://www.rsed.org/campusuite/modules/faq.cfm?grp_id=9614&main=0

¹⁴ See, for example, reports from the California Department of Education that look at Rocketship school Academic Performance Index (API) scores; retrieved August 15, 2012 for Rocketship Mateo Sheedy Elementary, <http://api.cde.ca.gov/Acnt2012/2011BaseSchSS.aspx?allcids=43104390113704>; to search across Rocketship schools see <http://api.cde.ca.gov/reports/API/APISearchName.asp?TheYear=&cTopic=API&cLevel=School&cName=rocketship&cCounty=&cTimeFrame=S>. If these URLs change after publication start with <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/ac/ar/> and search for “Rocketship.”

¹⁵ See the report from SRI International, “Evaluation of Rocketship Education’s Use of DreamBox Learning’s Online Mathematics Program;” retrieved August 15, 2012, <https://rsed.box.com/s/b71aad6508737ae4a891>

- K12 Inc. has run blended schools for several years, while also supporting district blended schools that use K12 Inc. services. The K12-operated schools include K12 Flex Academies in San Francisco and Silicon Valley. These schools combine online instruction with independent online and offline supervision and support. Students attend these schools full-time (roughly 8 a.m.-3 p.m. five days per week) and also can stay later for tutoring or extracurricular activities. K12 Inc.'s Hoosier Academies, in Indianapolis and Muncie, Indiana, at which students attend a learning center one day per week, and Hawaii Technology Academy, which also uses learning centers for students on some of the Hawaiian Islands, are other examples.
- VOISE (Virtual Opportunities Inside a School Environment) Academy, in Chicago Public Schools, uses a blended learning approach in which students attend the physical school. VOISE uses a “hybrid” blended-learning model where online courses act as the primary source of the course content.¹⁶ The VOISE Academy is a Chicago Public Schools (CPS) performance school created under the CPS Renaissance 2010 initiative. Also in Chicago, Youth Connections Charter School Virtual High School is a high school completion program with services provided by K12 Inc. Despite its name, it is a blended program for students ages 18 to 21 who dropped out of school, but aim to graduate with a high school degree. Students attend learning centers around the city. While these blended schools require students attend a physical location daily, the K12 Inc.-affiliated Chicago Virtual Charter School only requires students attend the physical school once per week.¹⁷
- The Kent Intermediate School District offers several hybrid learning options to students in 20 school districts in and around Grand Rapids, Michigan. The primary program, MySchool@ Kent, offers a hybrid high school experience where students take online courses combined with 135 minutes of required face-to-face learning lab-based instruction two times each week. Students are supported by two highly-qualified teachers in each course, one online and the other in the learning lab.

Multi-district fully online schools

Keeping Pace focuses on the fully online schools that draw students from across the states in which they operate for several reasons. First, these are the schools most likely to be fully online, without much (if any) onsite component, because the students are drawn from a large geographic area making an onsite element difficult. Because they operate entirely at a distance, these schools have been pioneers in many elements of online instruction (along with state virtual schools, which provide fully online courses). Second, in most cases data for these schools are available, because they operate as separate schools with their own school codes. Third, these schools have been the focus of extensive media attention about online learning, and therefore epitomize online learning for many people.

In SY 2012-13, fully online schools are operating in 31 states plus Washington D.C. (up from 30 states and D.C. in SY 2011-12). In SY 2011-12 these schools served an estimated total of 275,000 students. Figure 5 shows these states and student populations.

Attributes of multi-district fully online schools

Most multi-district fully online schools share the following attributes.

Organization type: Often organized as a charter school.

Affiliation: The schools that serve more than half of all fully online students are operated by education management organizations (EMOs), such as K12 Inc., Connections Academy, and

¹⁶ James Sloan and Katherine Mackey, *Pioneering a blended-learning model in a Chicago public high school (VOISE Academy)* (Innosight Institute, 2009), <http://www.innosightinstitute.org/media-room/publications/education-publications/voise-academy/>

¹⁷ While it may be the case that the required onsite time is best for students, it is also the case that some of these schools have an onsite requirement due to legal requirements. Charter schools in Chicago may not be based from home, and in California the administrative requirements increase significantly if students are not in a physical school.

Advanced Academics. The EMOs typically contract to provide courses, software, teacher professional development, and other key management and logistical support.

Geographic reach: Most of these schools attract students from across the entire state, in order to achieve scale; therefore most of these schools are in states that allow students to enroll across district lines and have funding follow the student.

Grade levels: All grade levels are offered in online schools collectively, although individual schools may be limited to older or younger students. The instructional model for younger students uses adult mentors (often, but not always, parents), who work with the students at home. The schools often send physical materials to students, including paper workbooks and science materials, to complement the online offerings.

Funding: Funding is usually provided via state public education funds that follow the student, though some are funded through appropriations, fees, or grants.

Enrollments: Most have few or no part-time students, and most have enrollments of a few hundred to several thousand students (FTE).

Accountability for student achievement: Because these are full-time schools, they are accountable in the same ways as all other public schools and/or charter schools in the states in which they operate. They report results of state assessments and adequate yearly progress (AYP).

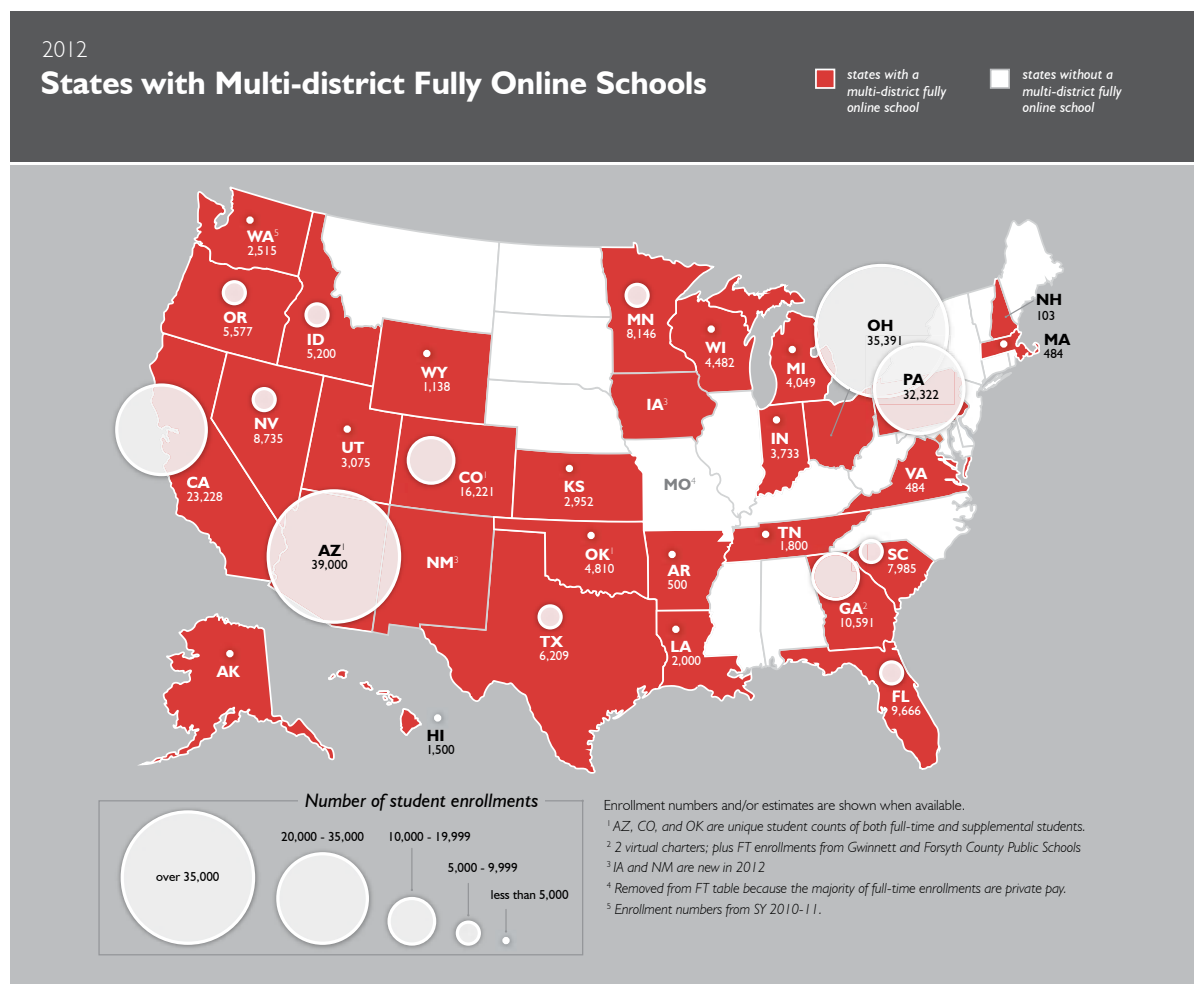


Figure 5: States with multi-district fully online schools and the number of students in those schools in states tracking and reporting these data.

Growth in states and students

In SY 2012-13 new fully online, statewide schools opened in Iowa and New Mexico, a somewhat slower pace than in some past years, bringing the number of states with these schools to 31. (We counted 30 states in this category a year ago, but have moved Missouri out of this grouping.) In several other states, including North Carolina, Maine, and New Jersey, policymakers considered allowing fully online schools for the first time, but ultimately decided against allowing them for SY 2012-13. The reasons and processes were varied. In North Carolina, for example, the North Carolina Virtual Academy (NCVA), an initiative of the North Carolina Learns nonprofit organization, was given approval by Cabarrus County Public Schools to submit a charter application to the State Board of Education (SBE) postulating that SB8 (passed in 2011) effectively removed the moratorium on statewide fully online charter schools. Before NCVA submitted its application for authorization, the SBE instructed its E-Learning Commission to develop guidelines and performance measures for online charter schools, delaying SBE action on the subsequent NCVA application. NCVA filed a lawsuit in March 2012, and an administrative law judge ruled that because the SBE failed to act on the NCVA application in a timely manner, the virtual charter school could open for SY 2012-13. NCVA planned to enroll up to 2,750 students in its first year.¹⁸ The case was appealed to superior court by the SBE, 89 of 115 school boards in the state, and the North Carolina School Boards Association. In June 2012, the court overturned the administrative judge, ruling that NCVA could not open and that only the SBE has the authority¹⁹ to determine which charters it will review and approve.

In Maine, LD1553²⁰ (2011) allowed charter schools for the first time and created a State Charter School Commission as the only entity that can authorize fully online charter schools. (Other types of authorizing entities are allowed in the law, and they can authorize charter schools that have an online component.) The commission debated the opening of two virtual charter schools in its June 2012 meeting, but decided to postpone approving them, noting a need for proper training to review future applications, among other issues.²¹

New Jersey was set to see its first two virtual charters open for fall 2012, but both schools were delayed and given an extra “planning year.” They both anticipate opening in fall 2013.

Growth in the number of students attending fully online schools in SY 2011-12 across the country was somewhat slower than in previous years, although it was rapid in a few states. In the states with the largest student populations in fully online schools or longest history with such schools, growth was typically around 15% (e.g., Idaho 10%, Ohio 14%, Oregon 16%, Pennsylvania 13%, Wyoming 18%). In some states with smaller starting numbers in SY 2010-11, the growth was higher (e.g., Indiana 694%, Michigan 406%, Georgia 112%). In other states, growth appears to have slowed (e.g., South Carolina 4%, Colorado 6%, Wisconsin 4%).

Table 3 provides a list of states with multi-district fully online schools, along with enrollment counts in states where the data are available.

¹⁸ NCVA fast-track charter application; retrieved June 15, 2012, <http://www.newsobserver.com/content/media/2012/6/6/Charter%20Application%20FINAL.pdf>

¹⁹ Under state law, three entities can approve charter schools: the State Board of Education, a local school district, and the university system. However, a local school district or the university system can only give initial approval, and final approval must come from the state board.

²⁰ LD1553 (2011); retrieved June 13, 2012, http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/bills/bills_125th/billtexts/SP049601.asp

²¹ Maine Charter School Commission Meeting June 15, 2012; retrieved July 10, 2012, <http://www.maine.gov/csc/meetings/06152012minutes.html>

Multi-District Fully Online School Enrollment							
State	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	Percent change 2010-11 to 2011-12	4-year % change 2008-09 to 2010-12 non-compounded growth	% of state students in FT online schools**
Arizona*	30,076	30,338	36,814	39,000	+6%	+30	3.62%
Arkansas	500	500	500	500	0%	0%	0.10%
California*	10,502	15,000	19,000	23,228	+22%	+121%	0.37%
Colorado *	11,641	13,093	15,249	16,221	+6%	+39%	1.95%
Florida	1,079	2,392	4,000	9,666	+142%	+796%	0.37%
Georgia	4,300	5,010	5,000	10,591	+112%	+146%	0.64%
Hawaii	500	500	1,500	1,500	0%	+200%	0.83%
Idaho	3,611	4,709	4,728	5,200	+10%	+44%	1.88%
Indiana*	<i>no FT</i>	200	470	3,733	+694%	<i>n/a</i>	0.36%
Kansas*	3,100	2,300	2,800	2,952	+5%	-5%	0.62%
Louisiana	<i>no FT</i>	<i>no FT</i>	<i>no FT</i>	2,000	<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>	0.29%
Massachusetts	<i>no FT</i>	220	318	484	+52%	<i>n/a</i>	0.05%
Michigan	<i>no FT</i>	<i>no FT</i>	800	4,049	+406%	<i>n/a</i>	0.25%
Minnesota	5,042	8,248	9,559	8,146	-15%	+62%	0.97%
Nevada	4,603	6,256	7,122	8,735	+23%	+90%	2.04%
New Hampshire	<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>	103	<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>	.05%
Ohio	27,037	31,852	31,142	35,391	+14%	+31%	2.01%
Oklahoma*	1,100	2,500	4,456	4,810	+8%	+337%	0.73%
Oregon	<i>no FT</i>	3,861	4,798	5,577	+16%	<i>n/a</i>	0.96%
Pennsylvania	22,205	24,603	28,578	32,322	+13%	+46%	1.81%
South Carolina	1,981	5,781	7,690	7,985	+4%	+303%	1.10%
Tennessee	<i>no FT</i>	<i>no FT</i>	<i>no FT</i>	1,800	<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>
Texas	1,997	4,558	5,133	6,209	+21%	+211%	0.23%
Utah	500	1,475	1,572	3,075	+96%	+515%	0.53%
Virginia	<i>no FT</i>	<i>no FT</i>	400	484	+21%	<i>n/a</i>	0.04%
Washington*	1,840	2,260	2,515	<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>	0.24%
Wisconsin	3,100	3,927	4,328	4,482	+4%	+45%	0.51%
Wyoming	100	807	964	1,138	+18%	+1,038%	1.29%

** Total student population 2009-10, National Center for Education Statistics, <http://nces.ed.gov/programs/stateprofiles/>

AZ, CO, and OK are unique student counts of both full- and part-time students.

AZ 2011-12 enrollment data is an estimate.

CA data source changed from 2011; 2010-11 data is an estimate.

IN numbers include some blended schools run by national EMOs.

KS and WA started separating FT enrollments in its most recent year's reporting; previous years are estimates of FT users based on the same percentage of the unique student count. WA 2011-12 enrollment data not yet available.

MO was removed from FT table because the majority of full-time enrollments are private pay.

Table 3: Multi-district fully online school enrollment

Consortium and educational service agency programs

Many districts are increasingly recognizing that they do not have the resources to invest in an online school or courses on their own, but they still want to offer online options to their students. Some of these districts are creating consortia to create online schools or courses, with the costs and benefits spread among member districts. These programs may be run by a group of school districts, by a nonprofit organization that works with schools, or by an intermediate education agency. They are usually funded by member schools or by course fees, and may be supplemental, fully online, blended, or some combination of program types. In most cases, the consortium works across part or all of a state, although The VHS Collaborative (VHS) operates in 33 states and internationally. Some consortium programs, such as VHS and the Wisconsin eSchool Network, have been operating for many years, while others have started recently.

Additional details on several consortium programs are provided in *Keeping Pace 2011*.²² We recognize, however, that greater detail can be valuable, and below describe the Wisconsin eSchool Network (WEN), one of the older and larger consortium programs operating in a single state.²³

WEN²⁴ is a consortium of 16 partnering school districts, eight of which are among the 11 largest districts in Wisconsin. The districts include those with no experience in online learning, those running statewide online charter schools, district-level supplemental programs, and blended learning programs, some which have been in operation for more than 10 years. WEN served 5,173 course enrollments in SY 2011-12, and in 2012 it is restructuring the organization as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. WEN also has taken steps to increase its reach by adding a newly revamped Affiliate Membership. Just as with an Invested Member, an Affiliate Member is able to access the consortium program offerings. However, instead of gaining access to WEN as an Invested Member with a large up-front investment fee, Affiliate Members are able to join with a two- or four-year commitment, paying much smaller annual membership fees based on their projected enrollment.

In August 2012 WEN signed an MOU with the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction and Wisconsin Virtual School, forming a new collaboration known as the Wisconsin Digital Learning Collaborative.²⁵ This partnership will work towards increased equitable access and maximized efficiencies together ensuring high quality program offerings.

Elements of the WEN structure and model of the consortium include:

- Initially WEN used a standard memorandum of understanding among districts; it has restructured as a nonprofit with a governing board whose seats are filled in part by Invested Member districts. It has two full-time staff and numerous contracted consultants.
- Invested members pay a significant initial membership fee of \$200,000 (payments, if needed, can be made over five years) which is used to develop and purchase program resources (curriculum, systems, etc.) and infrastructure. Ongoing operations are supported by a per-enrollment operations fee based on actual costs and membership level.
- The consortium originally provided curriculum through WEN-owned (perpetual) curriculum. WEN now has an owned/perpetual catalog of about 50 courses. Over the past year, WEN utilized its combined enrollments to leverage licensed curriculum at a much lower per enrollment fee than most districts are able to procure independently. In addition, local districts have the ability to develop curriculum locally and host their courses on WEN's systems.
- Other services and resources WEN provides include an LMS license (including basic LMS tech support to district administrators and teachers), a highly customized SIS, a ticketing system, a

²² In 2011 we said consortium programs were being created mostly by small and mid-size districts. While that is largely true, we are seeing more consortium programs that include large districts, such as eLINC (Colorado), which includes several districts among the largest in the state.

²³ We are grateful to the cooperation of the Wisconsin eSchool Network in helping us create this description.

²⁴ <http://www.wisconsineschool.com/>

²⁵ See news release, "Evers announces expansion of online learning opportunities for students," August 21, 2012; retrieved August 23, 2012, http://dpi.wi.gov/eis/pdf/dpinr2012_87.pdf

web-based conferencing tool (costs are prorated to those utilizing this), and consulting and professional development services, including a 30-hour course on how to teach online (which is required for all online teachers in Wisconsin).

- Member districts utilize maximized autonomy as members provide support for their local programs through common staffing models, including a local administrator/district liaison, a registrar, a coach, and instructional staff.
- Districts decide the online model and scale of usage: Some districts run fully online schools, some run supplemental online programs, some use WEN services for blended learning programs.
- WEN operates with the intent of helping members scale to full capacity utilizing local resources aimed at meeting the needs of local students, goals, and community needs. Simultaneously, WEN provides shared resources to assist when a member may not have a local instructor to support their program. This support is known as “network enrollments.” For example, a district with open slots in an algebra course will allow students from other districts to enroll in that course as needed. About 80% of enrollments are classified as “local enrollments” meaning a local student is taught by a local instructor, while 20% are classified as “network enrollments,” meaning a local student is taught by an instructor from another member district.
- Districts try to balance enrollments so that course seats are exchanged. If not balanced, the under-enrolling district pays \$260 per course enrollment to cover the instructional costs the providing district incurs per enrollment.

State virtual schools

State virtual schools remain an important part of the online learning landscape, especially in states such as Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Michigan, and Montana. As of fall 2012, 27 states had a state virtual school, accounting for 619,847 course enrollments, a 16% annual increase (Figure 7).

As a whole, state virtual schools are relatively less important than they were in past years, for two main reasons. First, in most states individual districts, consortia, and private providers are playing a larger role in providing supplemental online courses. Second, in many states the state virtual school has been underfunded or defunded. This continues a trend we reported in *Keeping Pace 2011*.

Also in 2011, *Keeping Pace* reported that state virtual schools were increasingly bifurcating into two categories: those large enough to have a significant impact on opportunities for students across the state, and those that are so small or underfunded that their impact is small relative to their state. In 2012, we see that trend accelerating. State virtual schools that are large and/or serving a large percentage of their state high school population include:

State Virtual School	Course Enrollments	Annual Growth	Ratio to State Population*
Florida Virtual School	303,329	+17%	38.7
New Hampshire Virtual Learning Academy	15,558	+35%	24.2
North Carolina Virtual Public School	97,170	+10%	22.6
Idaho Digital Learning	17,627	+22%	21.6
Alabama ACCESS	44,332	+31%	20.2
Montana Digital Academy	6,797	+49%	15.5
South Carolina Virtual School Program	15,831	+41%	7.5
Georgia Virtual School	20,876	+45%	4.4
Michigan Virtual School	19,822	+12%	3.7

Table 4: A sampling of states with a prominent state virtual school

*Source: State high school population, <http://nces.ed.gov/programs/stateprofiles/>

States not currently funding a state virtual school at a level that would allow it to have a significant statewide impact include:

	Course Enrollments	Annual Growth	Ratio to State Population*
Connecticut Virtual Learning Center	2,049	- 7%	1.2
Illinois Virtual School	2,795	- 7%	.4
Texas Virtual School Network	12,419	- 27%	.9
Kentucky Virtual Schools	1,700	- 1%	.9

Table 5: Sample of states with state virtual schools that have remained or become small;
***Source: State high school population, <http://nces.ed.gov/programs/stateprofiles/>**

Tables 4 and 5 show state virtual schools in two categories. Table 4 shows a sample of the state virtual schools with a large number of course enrollments and that are serving a large percentage of the state's high school population. These schools are either funded based on a formula that taps into the public education funding formula (e.g., FLVS and NCVPS), or are well-funded via state appropriations relative to the size of the state (e.g., Alabama), so that districts pay little or nothing for their students to take an online course. Table 5 shows a sample of state virtual schools that have remained (or become) small in 2012, usually because of low funding.

Florida Virtual School remains by far the largest state virtual school. Figure 6 shows its completion history, reflecting its growth to 303,329 course enrollments in SY 2011-12. The growth of FLVS reflects a fairly simple set of policy and funding choices: FLVS was first supported with state appropriations totaling more than \$20 million in the late 1990s and early 2000s; subsequently Florida passed a law that allows any student in Florida to choose an FLVS course, and that student's funding follows her to pay for the FLVS course.

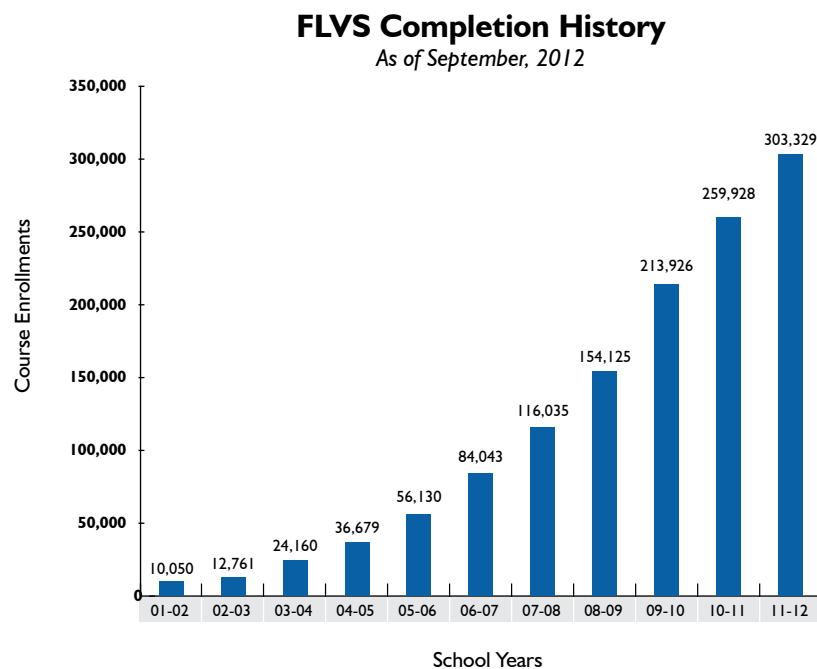
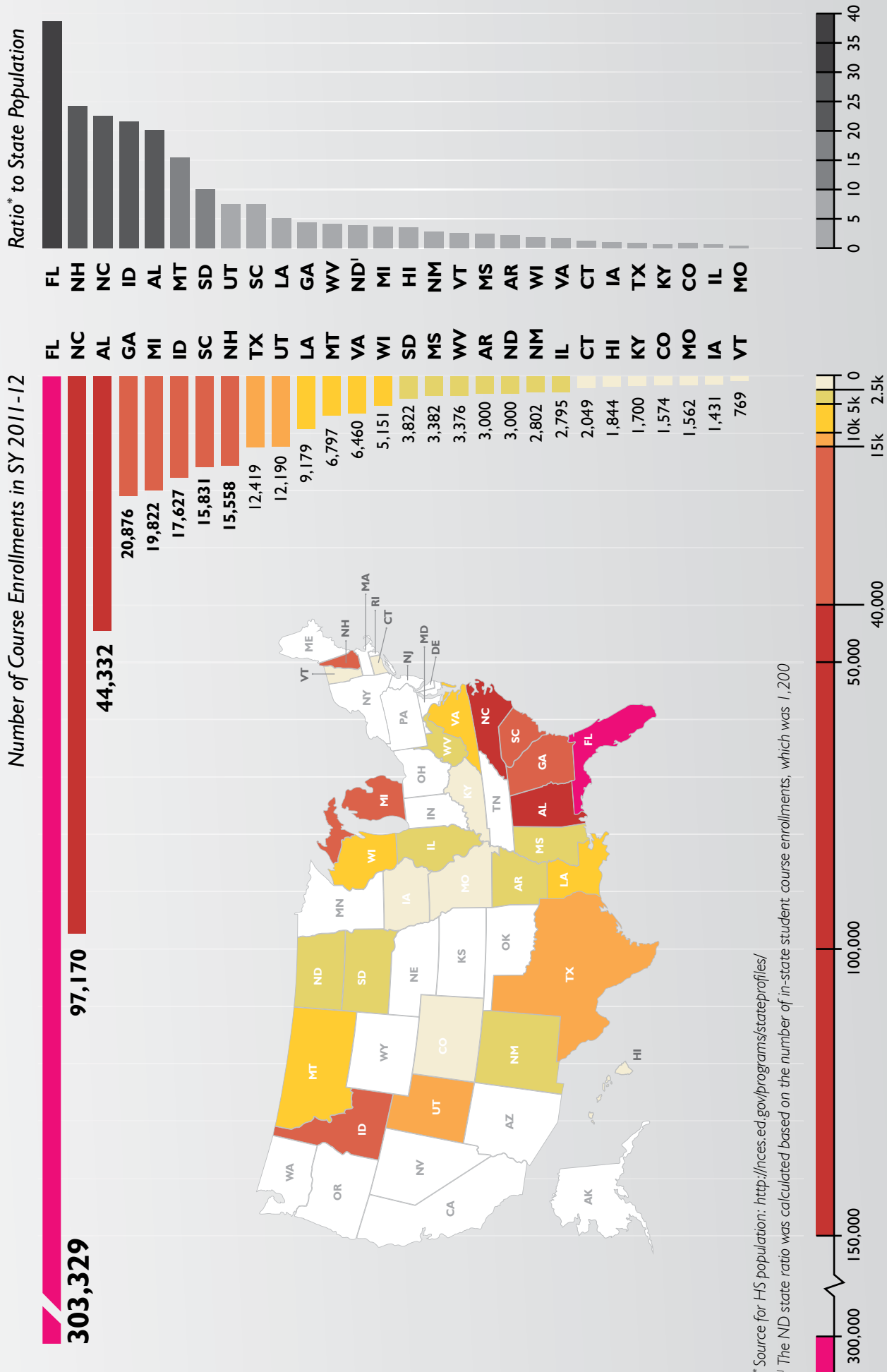


Figure 6: FLVS completion history

State Virtual Schools

Program Size and Ratio to State Population



* Source for HS population: <http://nces.ed.gov/programs/stateprofiles/>

† The ND state ratio was calculated based on the number of in-state student course enrollments, which was 1,200

Figure 7: State virtual schools

At the other end of the spectrum, we see, for the first time, states shutting down state virtual schools. Kentucky Virtual Schools, one of the oldest state virtual schools but one that never grew much, closed in 2012. The Kentucky Department of Education is instead “providing information and support for families and schools to utilize in their evaluation of full-time and part-time online learning options available through multiple statewide providers.”²⁶ In Tennessee, the state virtual school had been funded via Enhancing Education Through Technology grant money, and with the loss of the funds the state virtual school closed prior to SY 2011-12. In Louisiana and Idaho there has also been discussion of multiple providers replacing at least some of the state virtual school role, although neither state has gone as far as Kentucky and Tennessee. In Nebraska, a pilot initiative to establish a state virtual school in 2011 has ceased, following similar limited efforts in Delaware in 2008 that ended without a viable state virtual school.

The debates about the state virtual school role often hinge on political views of public agencies versus private providers. What is lost is that in at least some of these cases—Idaho and Louisiana among them—the change being contemplated would replace an established provider in a proven system of funding and quality assurance (which is built around a public agency) with a set of private providers. While many of those private companies have demonstrated success with district clients, there is as yet no example of a state replacing its state virtual school with a system of funding and quality assurance using multiple private providers that has resulted in improved student outcomes. A better approach might be to augment a single provider with increased options from multiple providers, while ensuring adequate funding and quality.

Michigan, and its Michigan Virtual School (MVS), has taken a unique path in 2012 that suggests a new approach to the role of a state virtual school. MVS has experienced annual increases in online course enrollments since its inception in 2000. It surpassed 100,000 cumulative enrollments in 2012. In recent years, the online and blended learning landscape in Michigan has evolved and expanded as new providers have entered the market, as district and consortium programs have expanded, and online charter schools have been introduced. New legislation in 2012 expands the role of MVS in various areas related to policy, capacity building, and research and innovation. This legislation directs MVS to conduct a variety of tasks, including:

- Establishing a *Center for Online Learning Research and Innovation*.
- Piloting a new performance-based funding model for online learning.
- Analyzing the effectiveness of online learning delivery models.
- Recommending criteria by which cyber schools and online course providers should be evaluated.
- Identifying and sharing best practices related to online learning.
- Developing and reporting policy recommendations to the governor and the legislature.
- Recommending standards for a new teacher endorsement credential for online instruction.
- Producing a consumer awareness report related to online learning for schools and parents.

Perhaps most important, these new roles are in addition to—not instead of—Michigan Virtual School’s ongoing role in providing online courses.

²⁶ Kentucky Department of Education; retrieved July 17, 2012, <http://www.kyvs.org/webapps/portal/frameset.jsp>

Postsecondary programs

A significant portion of the online learning activity in postsecondary institutions has roots in correspondence courses and independent studies programs that, in some cases, are decades old. NCES noted in its 2011 report *Distance Education Courses for Public Elementary and Secondary Students* that 50% of districts reporting distance students said that postsecondary institutions delivered courses to their students. However, many postsecondary institutions are in segments not studied by *Keeping Pace*, including private schools, private pay (courses paid for by students or parents, without involvement by the school district except to accept credits), and college-level classes that don't carry K-12 credits. Other programs which work at least in part with school districts include the following:

- The University of Missouri-Columbia High School (MU High School) is part of the Center for Distance and Independent Study and provides distance learning courses delivered asynchronously. It reported 700 full-time students and 8,458 supplemental course enrollments in 2010-11.
- USC Hybrid High School is a partnership of the Rossier School of Education at the University of Southern California and Ednovate. It is designed specifically for high school students most at risk of dropping out. The charter school opened in fall 2012 with about 150 9th graders; it will add a new group of 9th graders each year until it reaches capacity at 600 students in grades 9-12. Operating in a physical setting, it is a hybrid school that offers online curriculum delivery and student support in a brick-and-mortar setting.

Some online consortia run by K-12 organizations include postsecondary partners. Examples include the Vermont Virtual Learning Cooperative, the Minnesota Learning Commons, and P-20 state efforts in New Mexico and Ohio. These partnerships tend to be driven by one or more of three elements:

- demand for dual credit courses
- expertise in online courses and programs, because they have run their own online programs
- professional development for teachers, which may be in conjunction with a teacher preservice program at the college.

Although private schools are not a focus of this analysis, there are some notable private K-12 postsecondary high schools often geared toward meeting the needs of college-bound students. K12 Inc. has partnered with George Washington University to open the George Washington University Online High School, a fully online, private college-preparatory school, one of the nation's first online secondary schools to be affiliated with a major research university. The school offers priority access to George Washington programs, including a customized pre-college summer program. The Education Program for Gifted Youth at Stanford University operates the tuition-based EPGY Online High School, which started in 2006 and enrolls students in grades 7-12. The Gifted LearningLinks (GLL) program, run by Northwestern University's Center for Talent Development, offers supplemental courses to gifted and talented students in grades K-12, while the Johns Hopkins University Center for Talented Youth runs a tuition-based online preparatory school called CTYOnline for pre-K-12 students. It is accredited for grades 5-12 and serves about 10,000 enrollments each year. CTYOnline also partners with schools to offer its courses directly, allowing the school to pay tuition for the student.

Key policy and practice issues

This section reviews several key policy and practice issues in online and blended learning: quality and effectiveness of online and blended learning generally and of specific schools, student choice at the course level, funding, NCAA course review, state online course graduation requirements, military acceptance of online students, and the iNACOL Online and Blended Learning Research Database. These issues can change quickly; for the latest information see the *Keeping Pace* blog at www.kpk12.com/blog/.

Quality and effectiveness of online and blended learning

Does online learning work? *Keeping Pace 2011* addressed this issue:

“Research from K-12 online and blended courses and schools has provided over a decade’s worth of evidence to suggest that teaching and learning online can work. Studies that have shown positive outcomes include the 2009 U.S. Department of Education meta-analysis²⁷ (which included a large proportion of studies looking at postsecondary students) and the meta-analysis done by NCREL in 2004.²⁸ In addition, data from and studies of specific schools have shown positive outcomes ... However, just because online learning can work does not mean online learning will work ... This finding is not unique to K-12 online and blended learning. Researchers studying educational technologies, ranging from educational radio and television²⁹ to asynchronous online environments,³⁰ have all found evidence of relevant studies that have shown both positive and negative outcomes ... Therefore, the challenge accepted by many researchers is to change the question from “does online learning work?” to “under what conditions does online learning work?”³¹

The body of evidence is slowly growing and is worth revisiting. Although studies published in the past year don’t change the overall conclusion—online and blended learning can result in better student outcomes if implemented well, or flat/negative outcomes if implemented poorly—new studies improve our understanding of the variables in implementing online programs.

Examples include:

- A study of Arkansas Virtual Academy School (ARVA) by the College of Education and Health Professions, Department of Education Reform at the University of Arkansas,³² compared

²⁷ Means, B., Toyama, Y., Murphy, R., Bakia, M., & Jones, K. (2009). *Evaluation of evidence-based practices in online learning: A meta-analysis and review of online learning studies*; <http://www.ed.gov/rschstat/eval/tech/evidence-based-practices/finalreport.pdf>

²⁸ Cavanaugh, C. S., Gillan, K. J., Kromrey, J., Hess, M., & Blomeyer, R. (2004). *The Effects of Distance Education on K-12 Student Outcomes: A Meta-Analysis*; <http://faculty.education.ufl.edu/cathycavanaugh/docs/EffectsDLonK-12Students1.pdf>

²⁹ Salomon G. & Gardner, H. (1986). The computer as educator: Lessons from television research. *Educational Researcher*, 15 (1), 13-19

³⁰ Swan, K. (2003). *Learning effectiveness: what the research tells us*. In J. Bourne & J. C. Moore (Eds) *Elements of Quality Online Education, Practice and Direction*. Needham, MA: Sloan Center for Online Education, 13-45

³¹ *Keeping Pace 2011*, p. 40-41

³² University of Arkansas, Internal Evaluation of the Arkansas Virtual Academy School, Ritter, Gary W.; retrieved May 31, 2012, <http://www.k12.com/sites/default/files/pdf/school-docs/ARVA-2012-UArk-Evaluation.pdf>

ARVA students “to nearly identical peers” in traditional public schools in Arkansas in math and literacy. The study found that ARVA students outperformed their comparison peers in math; the differences are substantial and statistically significant. Overall, ARVA students outperformed their comparison peers in literacy; these differences were positive and substantial (+ 4 percentile points). These positive trends were apparent in nearly all grade cohorts, but were particularly driven by strong growth in math for the students in grade 6 in 2008-09 and in literacy for the students in grade 4 in 2008-09. These groups experienced large gains that were statistically significant. ARVA free and reduced-lunch-eligible students outperformed their comparison peers in math; the differences are substantial (+ 8 percentile points) and statistically significant. These differences in literacy were positive and substantial (+ 6 percentile points). There were no statistically significant negative effects in any of the numerous analyses conducted. *Access to Algebra I: The Effects of Online Mathematics for Grade 8 Students*³⁵ looked mostly at students in “rural middle schools that did not offer Algebra I, even though some of their eighth-graders were academically ready for the course.” The study found that “fewer than half [of all students] completed all course units, [but] 96 percent of them stayed in the course the entire year,” and “students who took the online course *knew more algebra at the end of eighth grade* than did students who took the usual curriculum..., with an effect roughly equivalent to moving from the 50th to the 66th percentile in algebra achievement.” Students “also were almost *twice as likely to participate in advanced math courses in high school.*”

Skeptics might respond by noting that the study is comparing students who were given access to an online algebra course with students who did not have access to an algebra course—wouldn’t one expect students to do better if given access to a course for the first time? The answer is, of course, yes—but this skepticism misses the point. The students in the study showed improved outcomes because of the online course. Their situation is similar for the millions of students who don’t have access to the educational options that more fortunate students have; their options, opportunities, and outcomes can be improved by providing online courses to them.

- Rocketship Education is the highest-performing elementary school system in California serving predominantly low-income students, achieving an overall score of 868 on the 2011 Academic Performance Index (API) growth score, and outperforming upper-income communities in California. The Rocketship blended learning model individualizes the education experience for students, adapting to where they are and helping them master skills before moving on. To better understand why Rocketship students achieve such success, SRI International performed an independent study and released the results in August 2011. The 16-week study compared a control group of students receiving a total of five hours of online instruction to a group receiving an average of 22 hours of online instruction. It found that, “Rocketship students who had greater access to online math instruction, specifically the DreamBox Learning program, achieved significant gains in overall mathematics scores.” Students gained an average of 5.5 percentile points with 16 weeks of online instruction.

The studies above support the conclusion that online and blended learning can work. Other studies suggest specific online schools are not performing as well, at least based on the measures that states most commonly use. One study, for example, found that among online schools studied, “mean performance on state math and reading assessments consistently lags behind performance levels of the states from which the schools draw their students.”

³⁵ Heppen, J.B., Walters, K., Clements, M., Faria, A-M., Tobey, C., Sorensen, N. Culp, K. (Dec 2011). *Access to Algebra I: The Effects of Online Mathematics for Grade 8 Students* (NCEE 2012-4021). Washington DC: U.S. Department of Education. <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/projects/project.asp?ProjectID=231>. Quotes come from [://thejournal.com/articles/2012/07/02/online-algebra.aspx](http://thejournal.com/articles/2012/07/02/online-algebra.aspx)

What accounts for these differences in outcomes? The evidence suggests the differences are based more on shortcomings in state data and assessment systems than on differences in the schools themselves.

Assessing online schools and courses

The question of whether online and blended learning as a mode of instruction *can* work is, of course, very different than assessing whether a particular school or course is effective. That second question—the effectiveness of a school or course—should be easily answerable. In most states, however, assessment and data systems are not up to the task of answering that seemingly simple question with a clear answer, especially at the course level.

Several elements complicate the issue of effectiveness. The first is that many states, and many media publications, report primarily based on school accountability, which usually is a snapshot of how well groups of students do on a single assessment. This tells us nothing about how much the student has learned in the recent past, thereby telling us little about how well the school has educated the student in the preceding year. While this may seem to be an obvious point that has been made many times in recent years, until state accountability systems focus on multiple measures of performance, rightly or wrongly, the effectiveness of K-12 learning will be judged based on proficiency results.

Many states recognize the limitations of proficiency measures, and are using student growth. Growth measures ideally look at how much a student has learned in a given period of time. A measure of growth is necessary because proficiency measures alone will reward schools whose students arrive above grade level, and penalize schools whose students arrive below grade level. This is of particular concern to online schools because they often are the option of last resort for students who are at-risk, under-credit, or otherwise not successful in a physical school.

Student growth calculations, however, are complex and vary in significant ways.³⁴ Saying that a state uses student growth as a measure is, in fact, not very descriptive. The fact that such measures differ is illustrated by the fact that online schools tend to show better results under some systems than under others. Schools operated by national education management organizations show highly divergent results in different states. Given that these schools are using the same course content and learning management system, and given that teachers are being hired under comparable circumstances and receiving similar professional development, the differences in results between states suggest that the variation may lie in the measurement system, not in the schools.³⁵

An additional complicating factor is that many online schools do not report to the state as a separate school, so their students fall into district numbers and are not disaggregated. The 2011 Minnesota State Audit of online schools, for example, did not include some of the largest online schools in Minnesota because the schools do not have their own school code.³⁶

These issues apply to all schools, not just online schools; limitations of state assessment systems and measures such as Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) are well documented.³⁷ Online schools, however, often serve large numbers of under-credited or at-risk students, or highly mobile student

³⁴ A report that is particularly useful for understanding growth models is from the Council of Chief State School Officers: *State Growth Models for School Accountability: Progress on Development and Reporting Measures of Student Growth*; http://www.ccsso.org/Documents/2010/State_Growth_Models_2010.pdf

³⁵ An alternative explanation is differences in funding levels between states account for differences in student outcomes. Although this is plausible, our analysis to date (this is an area that requires further study) suggests state assessment systems are more likely to account for the differences than the different funding levels.

³⁶ Office of the Legislative Auditor, State of Minnesota, *Evaluation Report: K-12 Online Learning*; retrieved September 19, 2012, <http://www.auditor.leg.state.mn.us/pecl/2011/k12oll.htm>

³⁷ See for example the National Education Association, <http://www.nea.org/home/13112.htm>

populations; these are student populations that generally do not perform well on proficiency measures. (Some inner-city schools have similar demographics and show similar results; even some schools that are showing improvement based on a close look at student growth don't appear to be doing well based on inadequate state systems.³⁸)

The potential and need for change in how all schools are evaluated exists, and online schools are as good a starting point as any because they serve a small percentage of all students. Many educators and policymakers recognize that existing data systems are not up to the task. The national assessment consortia Partnership for Readiness of College and Careers (PARCC) and Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium will help the situation for math and English language arts, but we are years from their implementation. To wait for them to be in place is to keep in place systems that are not satisfactory.

States that recognize the shortcomings of proficiency and the challenges of student growth models are beginning to use multiple measures to create a more robust picture of student and school performance. The measures most commonly used include proficiency and growth, but add high school graduation rate, college and career readiness, and closing the student achievement gap between demographic groups. Some of these measures are being used in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) waivers being granted by the U.S. Department of Education.

iNACOL has conducted more detailed research into quality assurance based on performance metrics and outcomes than we can report in *Keeping Pace*. iNACOL will be helping states implement multiple measures that better capture a true picture of student and school performance. We expect between iNACOL's work, ESEA waivers and possible reauthorization, and progress by individual states, we will see considerable progress in quality assurance frameworks to address this issue in the coming year.

Student choice at the course level

Among the most important new laws passed in the last two years are those that allow students to choose online courses from multiple providers in Utah, Idaho, Oklahoma, Louisiana, and Florida, with funding following the student. These add to similar provisions that have existed in limited ways in Arizona and Minnesota. Student course-level choice is a policy provision often supported by online learning advocates, so understanding the details of the current laws, how they are being implemented, how they are playing out on the ground, and how quality is (or will be) assessed, are all important.

Course-level choice has existed in previous years in limited ways. In Florida, the constraint had been that students could choose from only one provider, the Florida Virtual School (FLVS). That restriction has not appeared to discourage students, as hundreds of thousands of them have taken FLVS courses. In addition, 2011 legislation mandated medium and large districts offer three different options to K-12, and small districts must offer at least one option to K-12.

Although similar course choice provisions have existed in Minnesota and Arizona, they appear not to have resulted in as many students taking individual online courses. The reasons for the difference between these states and Florida are unclear. One reason may be that, in these states, the providers of single courses were mostly LEAs that served full-time students, and they have had less interest in providing single courses. School guidance counselors may have been discouraging students from taking online courses from outside the district, or the absence of a single high-

³⁸ See for example *Measures That Matter: Why California Should Scrap the Academic Performance Index*, published May 31, 2012 by Education Sector, <http://www.educationsector.org/publications/measures-matter-why-california-should-scrap-academic-performance-index>

profile provider may have resulted in students being unaware of their options. It is also possible that school districts may have been unwilling to grant credits for these online courses.

Utah was among the first states to offer course-level student choice. SB65, the Statewide Online Education Program, was signed into law on March 30, 2011; it was amended with SB178 and went into effect on July 1, 2012.³⁹

- Students can supplement their brick-and-mortar education with online courses. Students/parents choose from courses and state-approved course providers; the student's primary school of enrollment does not have control. Homeschooled and private students are eligible.
- Subject mastery replaces seat time, which allows students to advance based on competency.
- Course selection is tied to the counselor-led Student Education Occupation Plan (SEOP), and must be aligned to graduation requirements. The student's LEA, in conjunction with the student and legal guardian, is responsible for creating the student's SEOP.
- Funding follows the student down to the course level, from "Primary Local Education Agency of Enrollment" to "Provider LEA." Funding is based upon successful completion; the provider receives 50% (25% per .5 credit) when a student enrolls and the remaining 50% upon credit earned. Providers are incented to provide course remediation. If a student does not finish a course on time, the student remains enrolled until the student graduates. Providers receive 30% of the final funding payment if the student earns the course credit any time prior to graduation.
- Multiple providers are authorized to offer online courses. Any LEA—charter or district—can be an online provider, and any LEA can contract with private providers to offer an online program.

The key questions in Utah are whether a similar percentage of students as in Florida will choose online courses. If not, is that because of the student's enrolling district and the role of the SEOP? Early anecdotal evidence suggests that some schools are denying access to online courses based on provisions of the SEOP.

Several of the laws in other states are ambiguous enough that how they will play out is unclear. For example, Oklahoma's SB280 (2011) states "[S]chool districts shall not deny students the opportunity to enroll in educationally appropriate courses and shall provide an admissions process which includes input from the student, the parent or guardian of the student, and school faculty." How "educationally appropriate" will be interpreted by school districts is among the key issues that will determine how the law is implemented. The law in Idaho calls for online course providers to be paid out of student funds except when a "school district or public charter school has a contract in place for the provision of online courses." The Idaho law could play out with students either being required or guided toward choosing courses that are selected by the district. Whether this is a good or bad development, it is not what was anticipated by advocates of the law when it was debated and passed. The complexity of both of these laws is clear when compared to the provisions that, in past years in Florida, made the choice of an FLVS course a clear and unambiguous option for students.

How quality assurance for online courses from multiple providers will play out is unclear as well. Idaho has an ambitious plan: Once courses are approved, quality assurance is monitored in two ways:⁴⁰ 1) end-user reviews based on evaluations by students and parents after course completion, regardless of how the student performed in the course, and 2) Visitor Privilege Evaluations

³⁹ SB65 (2011); retrieved August 30, 2012, <http://le.utah.gov/~2011/bills/sbillint/sb0065s01.htm> and SB178 (2012); <http://le.utah.gov/~2012/bills/sbillenr/sb0178.htm>

⁴⁰ Idaho State Department of Education, retrieved July 18, 2012, <http://www.sde.idaho.gov/site/digitalLearning/courseReviewAndAcademicForensicAudit.htm>

(VPE) completed by independent evaluators who have access to current, active online courses. An “Academic Forensic Audit” may be conducted by the state department of education if end-user or VPE reviews determine that a course does not meet standards, or if “55% of students or less achieve typical or high Student Adequate growth as measured by the Idaho Standards Achievement test in assessed subjects.”

In Louisiana, Act 2 (HB976, 2012) will expand student options for individual online courses beginning in SY 2013-14.⁴¹ The law creates the Course Choice program, which will allow approved third-party course providers to offer supplemental courses to students. Students attending schools graded C, D, and F, and students attending A and B schools where there are no equivalent course offerings, will have the right to enroll in any course and have the funding paid for out of each LEA’s minimum foundation program funding (MPF). The Louisiana Department of Education will pay the provider 50% of the course fee upon the student’s beginning of the course, and 50% upon successful completion; 10% of the MPF funding stays with the district for administration. The provider request for application process details were released in July 2012; course providers will be approved in December; and a full course catalog will be published in January 2013.⁴²

Funding

Online schools and programs are funded in a variety of ways. Some are linked to the funding for physical schools and some are not. Funding methods are depicted in Figure 8 and include:

- Appropriation, which is often used for state virtual schools.
- Standard ADA or ADM, which is often used by district programs.
- Online student funding, which sets a funding level or calculation for fully online schools.
- Charter school funding, which sets a funding level or calculation for all charter schools, including online charter schools.
- Independent study or other alternative programs, whose funding levels and calculation methods vary by state.

Course-level funding, especially funding that follows the student, is relatively new because student choice at the course level is relatively new (except in Minnesota). It is a subset of ADM/ADA funding, with the funding going to the course provider instead of to the student’s enrolling district.

A further subset of funding, most often applied at the course level, is performance-based funding. Several states have begun funding individual online courses partly based on demonstrated student success. In Utah, the provider receives 50% (25% per .5 credit) after the withdrawal period and the remaining 50% upon credit earned. In Louisiana, online course providers will receive 50% upon the student’s beginning of the course and 50% upon successful completion. In Texas, state funding to the home district for courses taken through the Texas Virtual School Network (TxVSN) is based on a student’s successful completion; in addition, 70% of the payment by the student’s home district to the TxVSN provider is earned for students in the course after the withdrawal period, with the remaining 30% earned upon student’s successful completion and credit earned. Florida is going a step further: funding for courses with end-of-course exams will be performance-based for both brick-and-mortar and virtual schools beginning in their fourth year of implementation; the first course will be Algebra 1 in 2013-14.

⁴¹ Act 2 (2012); retrieved August 26, 2012, http://www.doe.state.la.us/topics/act2_choice_law.html

⁴² Course Choice program; retrieved August 26, 2012, <http://www.doe.state.la.us/coursechoice/>



APPROPRIATION:

MOSTLY USED FOR STATE VIRTUAL SCHOOLS

+ PROS

If a state virtual school has good political support, this can be a relatively large appropriation

= CONS

Funding changes with the political winds; no tie to student numbers or outcomes, as the appropriation is a set annual amount demand often exceeds supply

STANDARD ADM/ADA: FOR DISTRICT PROGRAMS USING SUPPLEMENTAL ONLINE COURSES OR BLENDED PROGRAMS

+ PROS

No funding difference based on delivery mode

= CONS

Accounting mechanism is usually based on seat-time, not competency; that ties the programs to a variety of funding restrictions that don't make sense*

**such as limitations on when students can generate funding*

FULL-TIME ONLINE SCHOOL FUNDING:

THIS MAY OR MAY NOT BE BASED ON SEAT TIME

+ PROS

Setting a level for online students across the state makes sense

= CONS

The level is lower than for brick and mortar students; sometimes dropping to a level that is lower than most educators feel is adequate

STANDARD CHARTER SCHOOL FUNDING

+ PROS

Same level as physical charter schools, which is usually higher than the level set for online schools

= CONS

Funding may vary by district, which doesn't make sense for a school that draws students from across the state

INDEPENDENT STUDY

+ PROS

Funding tied to outcomes

= CONS

Sometimes requires burdensome paperwork (e.g. CA); otherwise can work well but can be hard to scale

Figure 8: Funding mechanisms for online schools and courses. This figure does not include performance-based funding, which is relatively new and applies mostly to individual courses.

Online learning requirements

As of September 2012, five states require students to complete an online course in order to graduate: Alabama, Florida, Idaho, Michigan, and Virginia (Table 6). Other states have passed legislation that encourages online learning. The West Virginia State Board of Education recommends all students complete an online learning experience during grades 9-12. New Mexico's SB0561 (2007) included a requirement that "at least one of the 24 units required for graduation must be an Advanced Placement, honors, dual enrollment or distance learning course." Minnesota passed SF1528 (2012), which strongly encourages students to take an online course. In addition, school districts are considering adding—or have implemented—online learning requirements. These include Cedarburg School District (WI), Kenosha School District (WI), Marietta City Schools (GA), Memphis City Schools, Putnam County Schools (TN), and Sugar-Salem High School (ID).

Idaho's SB1184 (2011) mandated that all students take two online courses in order to graduate from high school. However, SB1237 (2012) amends that legislation to allow districts to meet the requirement in two ways: 1) eliminates language that requires the student and teacher to be in two different locations; and 2) removes the requirement of a fully asynchronous course. A district will meet the requirements as long as 51% of the curriculum is delivered through technology. SB1237 also broadens the definition of "online course" to include synchronous or blended learning: "... Nothing in this definition shall prohibit a blended course that includes face-to-face, in-person instruction, provided that a majority of the instruction is delivered as stated herein."

State	Online Learning Requirement	Year Effective	Notes
Alabama	"...beginning with the ninth grade class of 2009-10, students shall be required to complete one online/technology enhanced course or experience in either a core course (mathematics, science, social studies, or English) or an elective with waivers being possible for students with a justifiable reason(s)."	Graduating class of 2012-13	Alabama State Code, 290-3-1-.02-(8)(d)4; http://www.alabamaadministrativecode.state.al.us/docs/ed/McWord290-3-1.pdf
Idaho	SB1184 (2011) mandated that all students take two online courses to graduate from high school. However, SB1237 (2012) amends that legislation to allow more flexibility for districts to meet the requirement.	Graduating class of 2016	SB1184 (2011) http://www.legislature.idaho.gov/legislation/2011/SI184Bookmark.htm
Florida	"At least one course ... must be completed through online learning ... an online course taken during grades 6-8 fulfills this requirement. This requirement shall be met through an online course offered by the Florida Virtual School, an online course offered by the high school, or an online dual enrollment course ... A student enrolled in a full-time or part-time virtual instruction program under s.1002.45 meets this requirement."	Students entering 9 th grade in 2011-12	CS/CS/HB7197 (2011) added Section 6. Paragraph (c) to subsection (2) of 893 section 1003.428: http://www.myfloridahouse.gov/Sections/Documents/loaddoc.aspx?FileName=_h7197er.docx&DocumentType=Bill&BillNumber=7197&Session=2011
Michigan	To graduate from high school, students must meet the online course or learning experience requirements as follows: "(i.) Has successfully completed at least 1 online course or learning experience that is presented online, as defined by the department; (ii) The pupil's school district or public school academy has integrated an online experience through the high school curriculum ..."	Students entering 8 th grade in 2006	ESB1124 Sec. 1278a (1) (b) (i and ii) http://www.michigan.gov/documents/PA_123_and_124_159920_7.pdf
Virginia	SB489 / HB1061 (2012) states that beginning with the 9 th grade class in 2013-14, the Virginia State Board of Education will modify graduation requirements to earn a standard or advanced studies diploma to include the "successful completion of one virtual course. The virtual course may be a noncredit-bearing course."	Students entering 9 th grade in 2013-14	Virginia State Code, Chapter 642 22.1-253.13:4; retrieved September 29, 2012, http://leg1.state.va.us/cgi-bin/legp504.exe?121+ful+CHAP0642

Table 6: States with online learning requirements

NCAA review of online courses⁴³

For high school athletes, the ultimate value of an online course is what the National Collegiate Athletic Association thinks of it, because students enrolling for the first time at an NCAA Division I or Division II college or university must have their academic credentials certified by the NCAA Eligibility Center in order to practice, compete, or receive athletically related financial aid. To be eligible, students must earn a qualifying “core course” grade point average (based on a predetermined number of core courses) and a qualifying test score.

Since January 2010, the Eligibility Center has reviewed over 750 “nontraditional” schools and programs (including online, software-based, credit recovery, and other similar formats) to determine alignment with NCAA requirements.⁴⁴

For a course to be considered core:

- The course must be a recognized academic course and qualify for high school graduation credit in one or more of the following areas: English, mathematics, natural/physical science, social science, foreign language, or nondoctrinal religion/philosophy.
- The course must be four-year college preparatory.
- Mathematics must be at the level of Algebra I or higher.
- The course must be taught by a qualified instructor.
- The course must be taught at or above the high school’s regular academic level.

Courses taught through nontraditional means (including online, software-based, credit recovery and other similar courses) must also satisfy the following requirements:

- The instructor and the student have ongoing access to and regular interaction with one another for purposes of teaching, evaluating, and providing assistance to the student throughout the duration of the course.
- The student’s work (e.g., exams, papers, assignments) is available for evaluation and validation.
- Evaluation of the student’s work is conducted by the appropriate academic authorities in accordance with the high school’s established academic policies.
- The course includes a defined time period for completion.
- The course is acceptable for any student and is placed on the high school transcript.

Requirements for nontraditional courses for Division I became effective for coursework completed August 1, 2010, or after. For Division II, the requirements for nontraditional courses for any student first enrolling August 1, 2011, and after are effective regardless of course completion date.

⁴³ Thank you to Nick Sproull at the NCAA for contributing this section.

⁴⁴ www.eligibilitycenter.org provides information on which courses have been reviewed by the NCAA Eligibility Center. Specific updates regarding nontraditional coursework review can be found in the “Additional Information” box for each school and program.

Military acceptance of online students

Historically, the Department of Defense linked distance learning graduates with alternative high school graduates and those with GED credentials, giving them Tier 2 recruitment and enlistment status. This status was limited to 2–10% of recruits, depending on the branch of the military. The 2012 National Defense Authorization Act, signed by President Obama on December 31, 2011, updates section 532 addressing military recruitment and enlistment.⁴⁵ The new legislation stated that all secondary school graduates shall be treated equally for purposes of recruitment and enlistment, as long as the graduate receives a diploma from a legally operating school in compliance with state laws. Additionally, it requested the secretary of defense to prescribe a new recruitment and enlistment policy within 180 days to determine who is qualified. It also suggested the use of data to analyze the success rates of different types of recruits.

The secretary of defense prescribed a new recruitment and enlistment policy in June 2012 that states that nontraditional students (including graduates of fully online schools), must score higher on the Armed Forces Qualification Test in order to receive the same treatment as graduates from traditional high schools. Online high school graduates who score 50 or higher are placed in the Tier I category, while traditional Tier I graduates are eligible to serve with scores as low as 31 to 36, depending on the service branch. If an online high school graduate scores less than 50 they are placed in the Tier II category which greatly reduces the likelihood they will be eligible to serve in the military.

This updated policy does not, in fact, treat all secondary school graduates equally, as required by the 2012 National Defense Act. iNACOL and other organizations are working with Congressional leaders to revisit the issue.

The iNACOL K-12 Online and Blended Learning Research Database project

Online learning educators and policymakers often want to know the latest research that is available, or a comprehensive and searchable source for research on specific subtopics in online and blended learning. The amount of research in the field of K-12 online and blended learning is growing, and this warranted the need for a place to quickly and effectively search for a variety of resources. A new source is now available: The iNACOL Online and Blended Learning Research Database at <http://k12onlineresearch.org>.

This project evolved from the University of Florida's Virtual School Clearinghouse (VSC), a website which documented a collaborative research project sponsored by the AT&T Foundation. VSC sought to aggregate and analyze data from virtual schools, particularly focusing on state-led virtual schools in the nine-state AT&T region. The VSC housed collections of resources including research on virtual schooling, instruments used to evaluate virtual schooling, and websites dedicated to the topic of K-12 online learning.

⁴⁵ 2012 National Defense Authorization Act; retrieved September 19, 2012, <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/BILLS-112hr1540enr/pdf/BILLS-112hr1540enr.pdf>

Planning for quality

Data on student outcomes show that online and blended schools can be high-quality, low-quality, or in between. These results demonstrate the need for planning and investment by districts, charter schools, and other entities that wish to create an online or blended school, or add an online component to an existing school. The critical initial question that all educators and stakeholders should ask when starting or expanding an online and blended program is:

What educational goals are we trying to meet?

Those goals may include creating new options for credit recovery and at-risk students; improving college readiness by increasing the availability of advanced courses; expanding the school day; enhancing existing classes; and ultimately transforming the instructional model being used with a goal of improving student outcomes. They must be prioritized and grounded in an understanding of existing constraints.

The following pages provide an outline of major strategic planning questions to consider in the early stages of development. They are organized around four key categories: Content, Teaching, Technology, and Operations.

Another important question in strategic planning for quality is “How long will it take us to implement a new program?” New to this section is a set of three project development timelines; each presenting a different project schedule based on a specific set of initial decisions that define the type of online or blended program most appropriate to meet your educational goals. Each timeline presents key milestone events leading to the launch of a blended or online learning program.

This section is a starting point, with the expectation that education leaders will subsequently use resources that are more detailed and in line with specific educational goals. In particular, the iNACOL website “How to start an online learning program”⁴⁶ is a superb source of detailed information that can be used for further planning.

Navigating the provider landscape

Program administrators creating online or blended programs face a large and confusing array of providers of content, technology, instruction, professional development, and other products and services. The confusion stems from at least three sources:

1. Many providers offer more than one type of product or service. The largest organizations, such as K12 Inc., Connections, and Advanced Academics, run entire schools but also offer

⁴⁶ iNACOL, retrieved September 19, 2012, <http://www.onlineprogramhowto.org/>

courses, sometimes with or without instruction included. Course providers such as PLATO, Apex, Florida Virtual School, Pearson, and eDynamic Learning may offer course content with or without instruction, as well as many other services.

2. Providers offer different trade-offs between flexibility and integration. Providers vary in terms of the ability they give you to put content into a variety of learning management systems (LMS), allow content editing by teachers, and integrate with data systems. The trade-off is that higher flexibility often means some loss of streamlining and may require greater investment in local systems or training. Think Apple vs PC. Apple's approach makes most applications work together easily and well, but limits the user mostly to Apple's options. Microsoft-based computers offer more software alternatives, but introduce new challenges as well. Neither approach is inherently better; each has its advantages and proponents.
3. The players change regularly. New providers are constantly entering the online and blended learning arena, and existing companies are merging, acquiring others, or moving into new areas. If six months has passed since you last surveyed the field, something has changed.

What should an administrator do to understand the provider options?

Given the nearly limitless possibilities, we suggest the following approaches as a starting point:

1. Understand the differences between providers who focus on blended or online learning, and those that are more closely aligned to classroom-based educational technology. A question to ask a provider to get at this issue: How does your product/service address the situation where students and teachers are not in the same location, where at least some instruction is done at a distance?
2. Start by determining your online or blended learning program plan (as described in the following pages), and then issue a request for proposals that is based on the key parameters of the program. Based on your program goals, ask if the provider can supply teachers that meet your state requirements, or alternatively if your program is using local teachers if the content and delivery environment allow your teachers to modify the content as they teach with it. Explain if you have an LMS that content must drop into, or if you are seeking an LMS. Being very clear about your program requirements helps you avoid a large number of proposals that won't fit your needs, and helps providers by limiting the number of proposals they write that will not be successful.
3. Require an online demonstration from a subset of providers. Good providers don't want to just *tell* you what they can do, they want to *show* you as well. Require a demonstration. Require that it be online. Allocate at least 90 minutes for each provider's demonstration, and drive the presentation to cover what you want to see, which may or may not be what the provider wants to show. Include a variety of staff that will be involved in decision-making and/or daily operation of the online and blended learning program.
4. Watching a demonstration is important, but it's also a bit like having a salesperson test drive a car for you. You should also require a log-in to a few courses so you can experience them in two modes: as a teacher and as a student. Have your review team spend time in the courses and compare notes about what you like and what doesn't work as well, keeping in mind the attributes of the students most likely to be taking the courses.

This process takes time, as you will see in the timeline pages that follow. If you are starting or growing an online program, however, you know—or will soon find out—that the ways in which teaching, content, and technology interact, and the services offered by different providers in each of those areas, can vary in important ways. You also know, or will soon find out, that even if you are developing most of the program in-house you will still be using some outside providers, for learning objects, professional development, evaluation, or other services. Time spent learning the provider landscape is time well invested, paying off in a better program for students.

1 ORGANIZED STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

A Include key stakeholders

QUESTIONS TO ASK

- What grade levels will be served?
 - Will you offer full-time,
 - supplemental,
 - blended learning,
 - or a mix of all?
- How will you manage the change process in your organization?
 - Will students be self-directed or will the teacher play a central instructional role?
- Have you identified a high quality program leader?
 - Have you identified a high quality program leader?

2 FOUR FOCUS AREAS



CONTENT



TEACHING

DECISIONS TO MAKE

- Content Acquisition
 - build,
 - buy,
 - license
 - or a mix?
- Content Purchase Options
 - Comprehensive provider (*full curriculum*)
 - Individual courses
 - Individual learning objects (*units, lessons, or other objects*)
- How do Open Educational Resources fit into the plan?
- How do you evaluate the quality of online content? (*iNACOL standards*)
- How can you link course quality to student outcomes?
- Have you confirmed alignment with district instructional strategies?
- What are the standards for good online and blended learning instruction?
 - How will you plan for teacher recruitment and hiring?
- What process will you use to evaluate your online and blended learning teachers?
 - How will you offer Special Education services unique to online and blended learning?
- What does professional development (PD) look like for first-time online or blended learning teachers?
 - Teacher preparation programs
 - Mentoring
 - PD by discipline
 - In-house or outsourced training?
- What supports are needed for teachers in their first year of online or blended instruction?

3 PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

B

Agree on defined educational goals for a targeted group of students

What are your goals in terms of individualizing instruction for students?

Will you operate on a traditional school calendar?
Will courses be open entry/open exit?



Remember: The goal is student learning



TECHNOLOGY



OPERATIONS

How will you ensure interoperability between technologies?

Which LMS approach serves us best?
Traditional vs.
Open Source

Internet access?
End-user devices?
Do you plan to use mobile devices?

What features do we need in a Student Information System (SIS) going forward?

Have you considered Total Cost of Ownership when making decisions?

How to create a process to choose the most appropriate Learning Management System (LMS)

How will our existing SIS work with online and blended learning?

What is the right synchronous tool?

PD for technology staff?

What facilities upgrades are required to support the program?

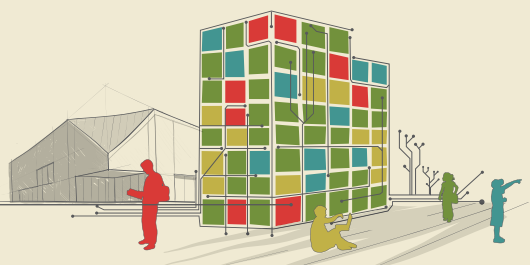
- Counseling
- Enrollment and orientation
- Technical support
- Academic support
- Learning centers

How will you organize for the challenge of student recruitment?

What will the budget look like for this new instructional model?

How will you conduct an evaluation of your program and learning results?

Have you engaged in a strategic planning process?





CONTENT

Content Acquisition

- build,
- buy,
- license
- or a mix?

Content Purchase Options

- Comprehensive provider *(full curriculum)*
- Individual courses
- Individual learning objects *(units, lessons, or other objects)*

Many content providers offer turnkey solutions pairing a complete online curriculum with technology and services. This comprehensive approach is relatively quick and easy, but can limit options and precludes content ownership.

How do **Open Educational Resources** fit into the plan?

Take the *iNACOL National Standards of Quality for Online Courses* and localize them for your use. Apply these standards to both content you develop internally or acquire externally.

How do you evaluate the **quality of online content**?

How can you link course quality to **student outcomes**?

Plan to track courses, units, lessons, and even learning objects to gains in student outcomes. Leverage the longitudinal tracking built into your LMS and SIS to retire ineffective content.

Have you confirmed alignment with **district instructional strategies**?

MAKE THE CONNECTION

■ Choosing a mix of build, buy or license increases your options while reducing consistency and restricting costs savings. Make sure you have a vision and leader to champion this effort.

■ Online instructional design is not a skill inherent in all teachers. Building online content requires staff expertise, the commitment of resources, and an extended time horizon for development, but you maintain control and ownership. Engage outside course reviewers to evaluate homegrown content.

■ Buying gives you access to high quality online content with immediate availability, but costs can be high and customization can be limited.

■ Acquiring complete courses offers convenience and an organized instructional approach, while seeking individual learning objects offers course design flexibility along with the responsibility to bring it all together.

■ Free always seems better, but quality can vary and the responsibility for search and retrieval requires dedicated staff time and expertise.

■ Establish a review committee with various skill sets to examine content, instructional design, online assessment, technology interoperability, and usability. Make it better than the textbook committee.

■ Can be an effective component of the content acquisition mix. To best utilize these resources requires a commitment to the community that supports and fosters Creative Commons licensing. You should add if you take.

■ Use formative and summative assessments to demand more from your digital content. Challenge students to maturely rate online content. Engagement counts.

■ Content aligns with district instructional strategies, including Common Core implementation. Strive for equal course rigor through shared assessments across instructional environments. Online courses are not the easy way out.



TEACHING

• **What are the standards** for good online and blended learning instruction?

• How will you plan for **teacher recruitment and hiring?**

■ Take the *iNACOL National Standards for Quality Online Teaching* and localize them for your use. Quantify standards where possible and establish an evaluation rubric for teachers. Help them know what is expected.

• What does **professional development (PD)** look like for first-time online or blended learning teachers?

- Teacher preparation programs
- Mentoring
- PD by discipline
- In-house or outsourced training

■ Avoid the myth, “any regular classroom teacher is qualified to teach online.” Some teachers will thrive using the new tool set offered online while others will struggle.

• What supports are needed for teachers in their **first year of online or blended instruction?**

■ The first online teaching experience can feel like starting over for many teachers. Push them towards a community of peers to share success strategies and work through tough times. Provide a formal structure, but encourage informal connections.

• How do you offer effective **PD for experienced online or blended teachers?**

■ Most of the teacher activities to support learning are documented in the LMS. Equip and train your administrators to understand online learning so they know good online and blended instruction when they see it. So much better than a brief classroom observation.

• What process will you use to **evaluate** your online and blended learning teachers?

MAKE THE CONNECTION

■ In blended learning environments, commit to instruction that gives students an increased level of control over the time, place, path and pace of their instruction. Help them take responsibility for their learning.

■ Know your program type, academic goals, and targeted student population. Develop a local profile of an excellent online or blended learning teacher. Challenge candidates by using online instructional tools in the hiring process.

■ Consider non-traditional recruitment processes. Offer part-time positions, flexible hours, and telecommuting as incentives. Look outside geographic boundaries for excellent candidates.

■ Get ahead and have your own required, in-depth, rigorous PD offering available to teachers prior to their first online or blended teaching experience. Don't rely on teacher preparation programs. Make PD your first thought, not an afterthought.

■ Be willing to look outside your organization for quality online and blended learning PD expertise. Consider organizing by PD discipline. Math teachers unite!

■ Online and blended environments call for teacher as facilitator. Support those who are making a big shift in their instructional style. Help them master the new communications tools and requirements. Communicate, communicate, communicate.

■ Plan ahead to support special education students and Individual Education Plans (IEPs). Include special education staff members in professional development that allows them to engage students in support of their online instruction. Support a culture that involves special education staff early in the online course.

■ Work with master teachers to establish a teacher evaluation rubric using nationally accepted standards, combined with local learning goals. Keep this group together to update the expectations based on successful online teaching techniques. Reward excellence.



TECHNOLOGY

How will you ensure interoperability between technologies?

Have you considered **Total Cost of Ownership** when making decisions?

As online and blended learning becomes an essential part of instruction, the need for technologies to seamlessly work together becomes critical. Truly integrated systems save money.

Which **LMS approach** serves us best?

How to create a process to choose the most appropriate Learning Management System (LMS)

Commercial vs.

Open Source

Internet access?

End-user devices?

Do you plan to use mobile devices?

Get ready for a large jump in school-based Internet bandwidth use and consider the access issues for all students outside the school building.

Always consider your instructional goals when purchasing end-user devices or establishing Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) programs. Have a plan to support multiple types of end-user devices. Leverage online and blended learning to support 1:1 laptop initiatives or BYOD.

What features do we **need** in a Student Information System (SIS) going forward?

How will our **existing SIS work** with online and blended learning?

Engage your SIS provider in a discussion about online and blended learning. Urge them to add features that support the unique nature of online learning. The bell schedule and defined academic terms may no longer apply.

What is the right **synchronous tool**?

PD for technology staff?

MAKE THE CONNECTION

■ Always calculate the indirect and non-budgeted costs associated with the implementation of an online learning technology. Low initial investments can be misleading.

■ Make sure the educational goals of your program drive your LMS choice. Create a review committee of LMS users in your organization to ensure that various use cases are considered.

■ Leveraging the instruction and achievement data gathered by your LMS requires a tight integration with your Student Information System (SIS). Look for solutions that are real-time and require less manual intervention.

■ If you purchase or license content, understanding how your online content will function in each LMS is an important part of the evaluation process. Choosing an LMS that supports the “native” importation of content will save you time and money while taking full advantage of the LMS features.

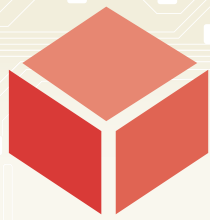
■ Generally, a strong technical staff is needed to support an Open Source solution, especially if you choose to customize the LMS for your needs. Always understand the long-term costs of a commercial LMS contract. Programs grow and costs increase.

■ Commercial LMS solutions support organizations with limited technical resources. Understand what support is offered with an LMS contract.

■ The evolved and flexible SIS supports delivery of student data from an LMS to an achievement “dashboard,” easy and cost effective customization for unique blended learning programs, and proven scalability for when your program grows.

■ Establishing a scalable online or blended learning program requires unique technology expertise. Support those who support your quality instruction.

■ Involve instructional leaders in the choice, investigate open-source options, and consider the advantages of effective LMS integration.



Facilities • Administration • Student Services • Communications

OPERATIONS

How will you offer **student support services** unique to online learning?

- Counseling
- Enrollment and orientation
- Technical support
- Academic support
- Learning centers

■ What facilities upgrades are required to support the program?

■ Involve your guidance counselors in the planning and implementation process for any online or blending learning program. Give them a view into some representative online courses, so they can properly advise students.

■ What will the **budget** look like for this new instructional model?

■ Be aware of the pitfalls of underfunding a new online or blended learning program in the first year of operation. Investment may be higher than initial revenues. Your best marketing is referrals from successful students in year one.

■ How will you conduct an **evaluation of your program** and learning results?

■ Start your strategic planning process with a needs assessment to help identify targeted educational goals that will affect student outcomes, especially where you are presented with unique educational challenges.

■ Have you engaged in a **strategic planning process**?

How will you organize for the challenge of **student recruitment**?

■ Enrollment marketing extends beyond recruitment for full-time online programs into outreach supporting new blended learning initiatives. Change the internal culture that assumes students are geographically bound.

MAKE THE CONNECTION

■ Develop an online orientation course for students to set performance expectations, familiarize the students with the technology and gauge their commitment. Consider successful completion a requirement to gain access to registered courses.

■ Plan ahead for facilities upgrades needed to support your chosen style of online or blended learning. This might include, but not be limited to, room configurations, flexible furniture, power availability and providing non-traditional student work spaces.

■ Online learning offers an opportunity to consider new staffing models including teachers, instructional coaches, graders, lab monitors and other roles. Commit the resources needed to hire a dynamic leader.

■ Consider offering non-traditional Learning Center environments in support of full-time or credit recovery online programs. Support student success with access to online courses outside of school buildings and during extended hours.

■ Work your program evaluation into your strategic planning and initial budget. Develop an integrated approach that allows you to monitor student outcomes, stakeholder satisfaction, and the quality of your content and teaching.

■ Plan to use data from LMS to inform your evaluation process. Put the systems in place that support commitment to longitudinal data. Establish transparency to the community through your stakeholder group.

■ Complete a vision, mission, and educational goals exercise and then use the outcome to drive key decisions. Involve diverse stakeholders, and post the results in a prominent place for all to see, don't file them away.

■ If you operate in an environment of choice, make sure you engage in a competitive market analysis. Outreach and marketing to parents and students is more important than ever.

Planning for Quality Timelines

The previous pages have raised critical planning questions and highlighted events and activities necessary in building an online or blended learning program, but how do the four focus areas (content, teaching, technology and operations) fit together into a project timeline? How do the initial decisions made based on educational goals impact the time it takes to implement an online or blended learning program?

In the following pages we provide three scenarios and accompanying project development timelines. Each presents a different development schedule based on a specific set of initial decisions. Each presents key milestone events by month, and provides a general sequence for starting specific tasks. The time to complete each step in the implementation process varies based on available resources and expertise, so the timelines generally do not recommend a duration for each task.

The timelines cover 18-, 12- and 9-month implementations based on three scenarios for program development:

Scenario 1 (18 months): Program development using course content created in-house, and using local teachers. This is the scenario which minimizes the use of outside providers. A provider is assumed to be used for the learning management system and for some learning objects that are incorporated into courses, but most course development and all teaching is done by the program.

Scenario 2 (12 months): Program development using local teachers and courses acquired from an outside provider. In this scenario the program provides the teachers, but courses are licensed or purchased from outside providers.

Scenario 3 (9 months): Program development using courses and teachers from an outside provider. This is the scenario that maximizes the use of outside providers, which supply courses and teachers.

The timelines follow the same color code for the four focus areas as in the preceding descriptions of content, teaching, technology and operations. Each timeline begins with a planning period, represented in black, that highlights the importance of the strategic planning process.

These timelines are intended to provide a starting point for planning and implementing your online and blended learning program and will vary, sometimes only slightly and sometimes significantly, based on your human resources, funding, facilities and need. The durations are based on the experience of *Keeping Pace* authors and sponsors. Your timing is likely to be different. As the car ads say—your mileage may vary.

• THREE EXAMPLE TIMELINES •

District Courses and Teaching



Provider-Supplied Courses and District Teaching



Provider-Supplied Courses and Teaching



• COMMON ABBREVIATIONS •

LMS: Learning management system

SIS: Student information system

PD: Professional development

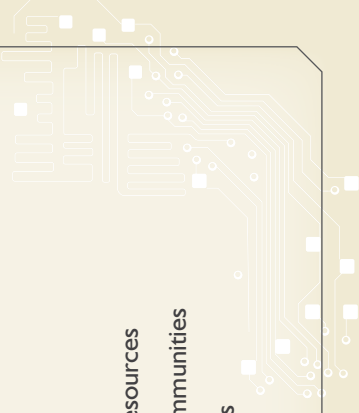
BL: Blended learning

OL: Online learning

OER: Open educational resources

PLC: Personal learning communities

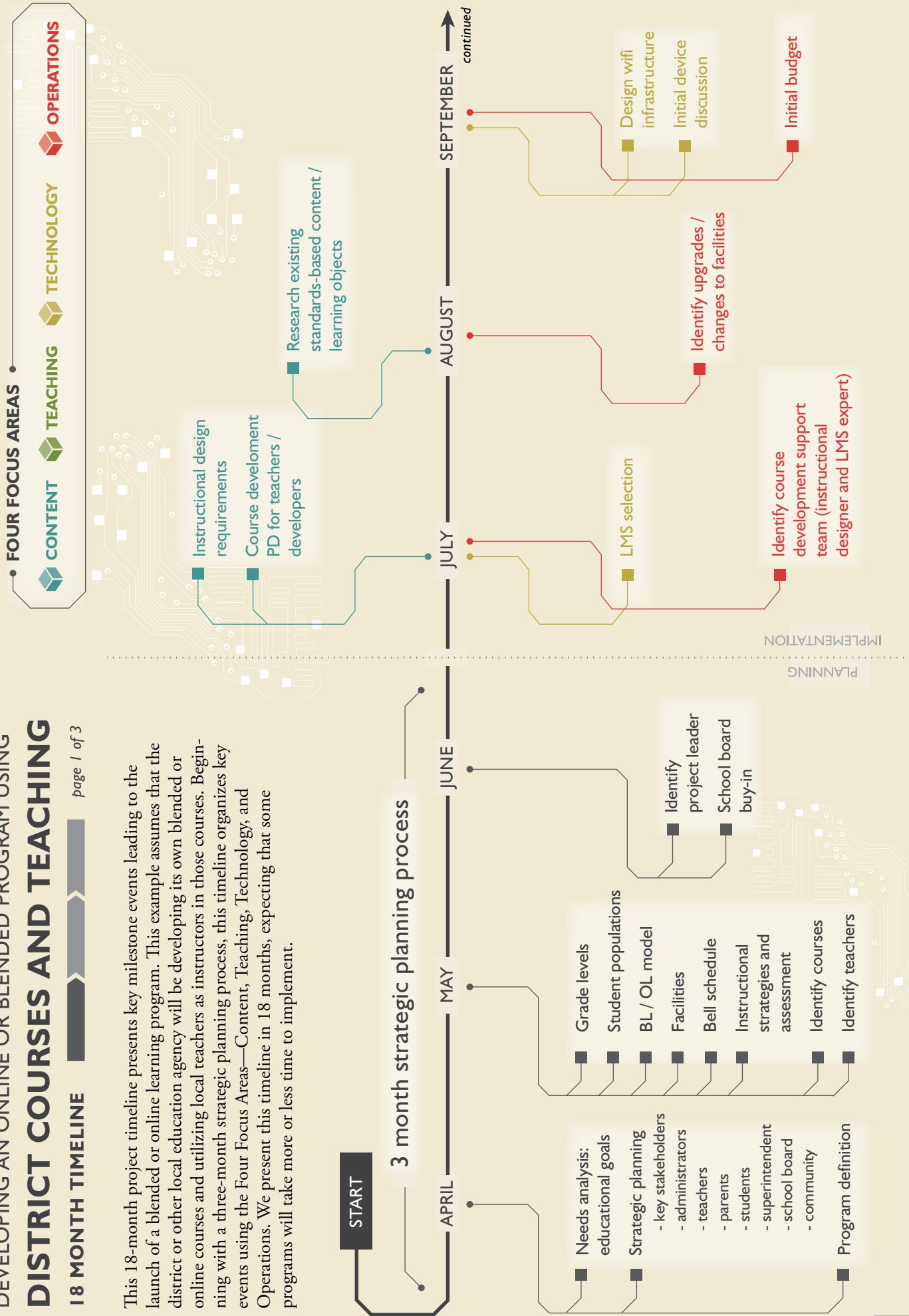
RFP: Request for proposals



DEVELOPING AN ONLINE OR BLENDED PROGRAM USING DISTRICT COURSES AND TEACHING

18 MONTH TIMELINE page 1 of 3

This 18-month project timeline presents key milestone events leading to the launch of a blended or online learning program. This example assumes that the district or other local education agency will be developing its own blended or online courses and utilizing local teachers as instructors in those courses. Beginning with a three-month strategic planning process, this timeline organizes key events using the Four Focus Areas—Content, Teaching, Technology, and Operations. We present this timeline in 18 months, expecting that some programs will take more or less time to implement.



DISTRICT COURSES AND TEACHING

18 MONTH TIMELINE

page 2 of 3

FOUR FOCUS AREAS



CONTENT



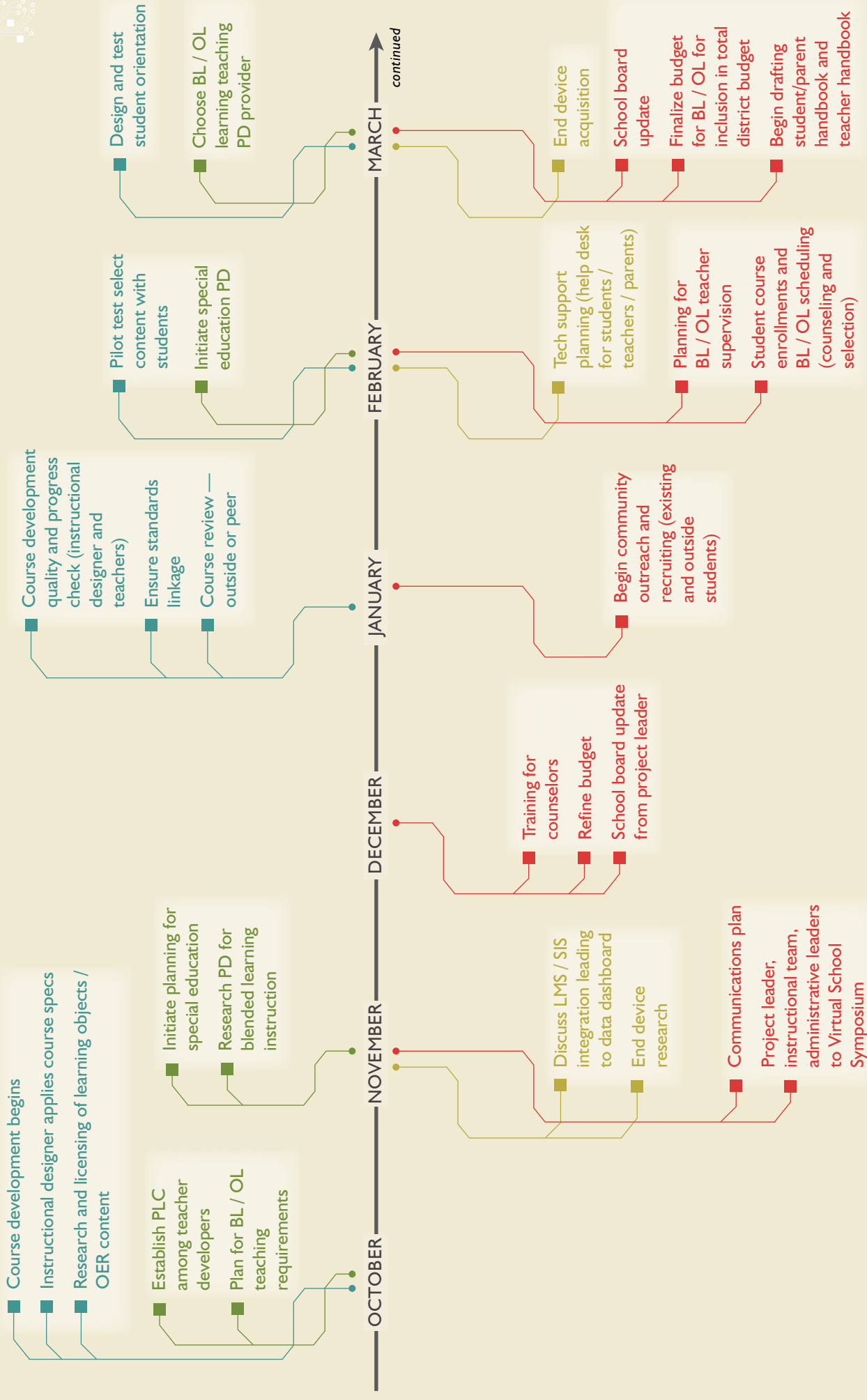
TEACHING



TECHNOLOGY



OPERATIONS



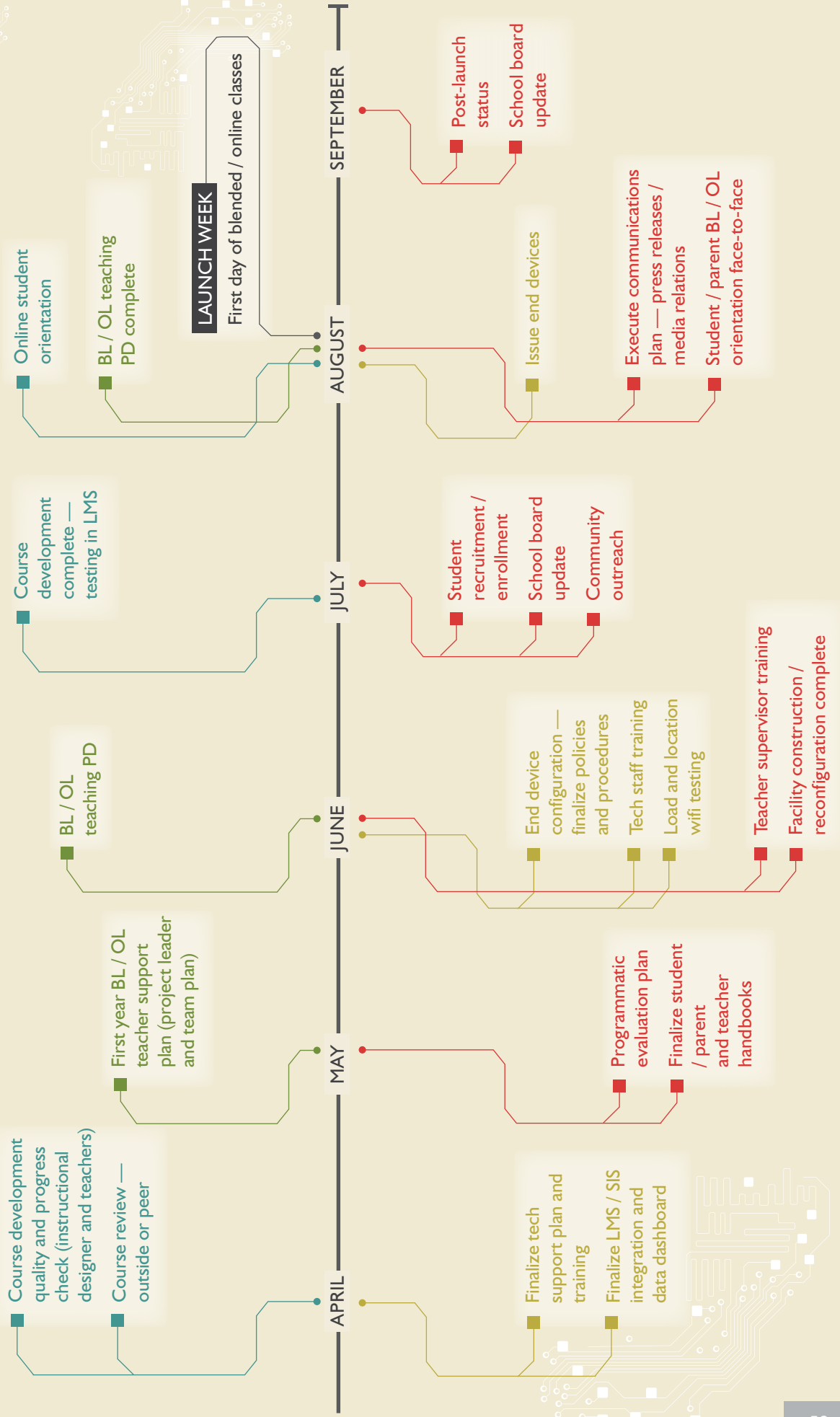
DISTRICT COURSES AND TEACHING

18 MONTH TIMELINE

page 3 of 3

FOUR FOCUS AREAS

- CONTENT
- TEACHING
- TECHNOLOGY
- OPERATIONS

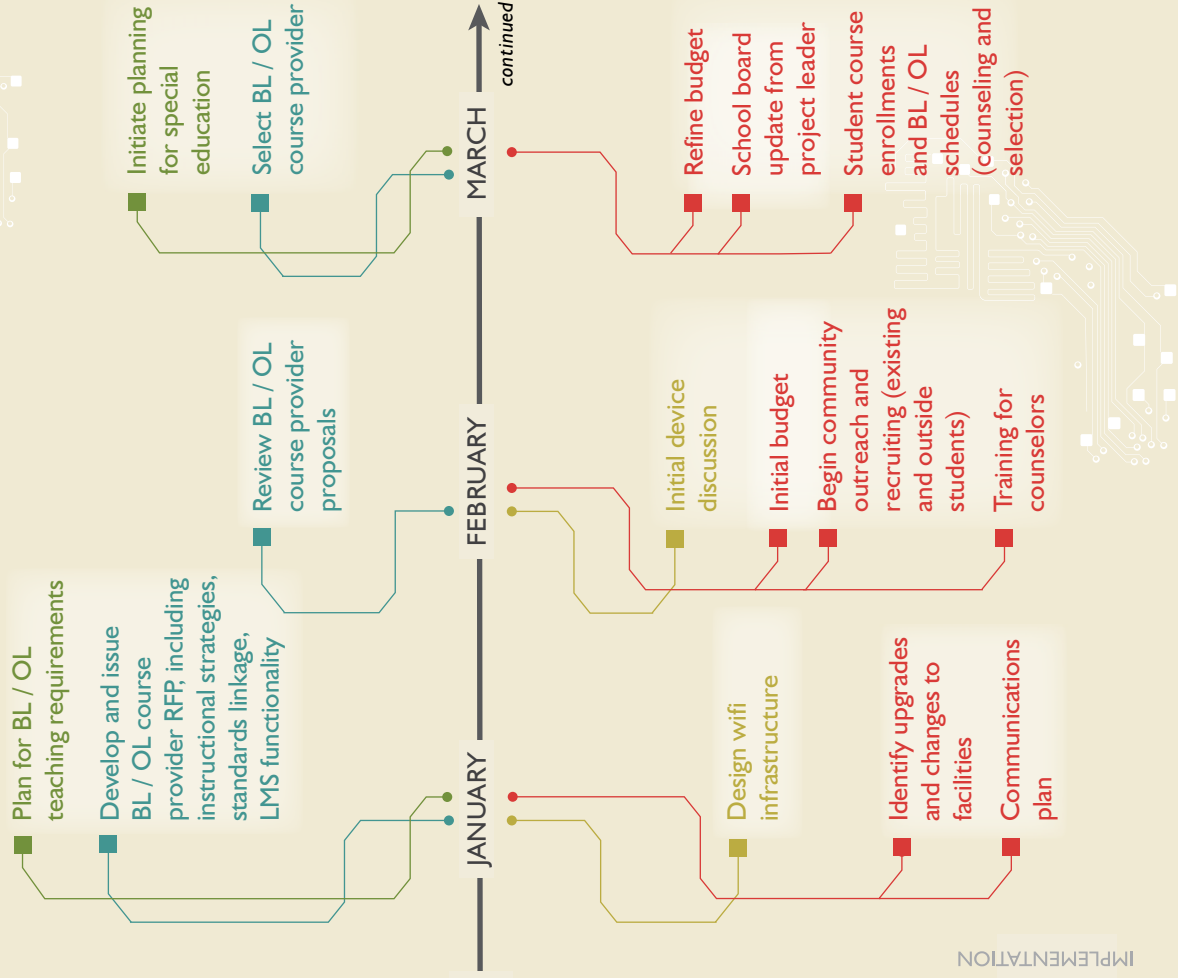
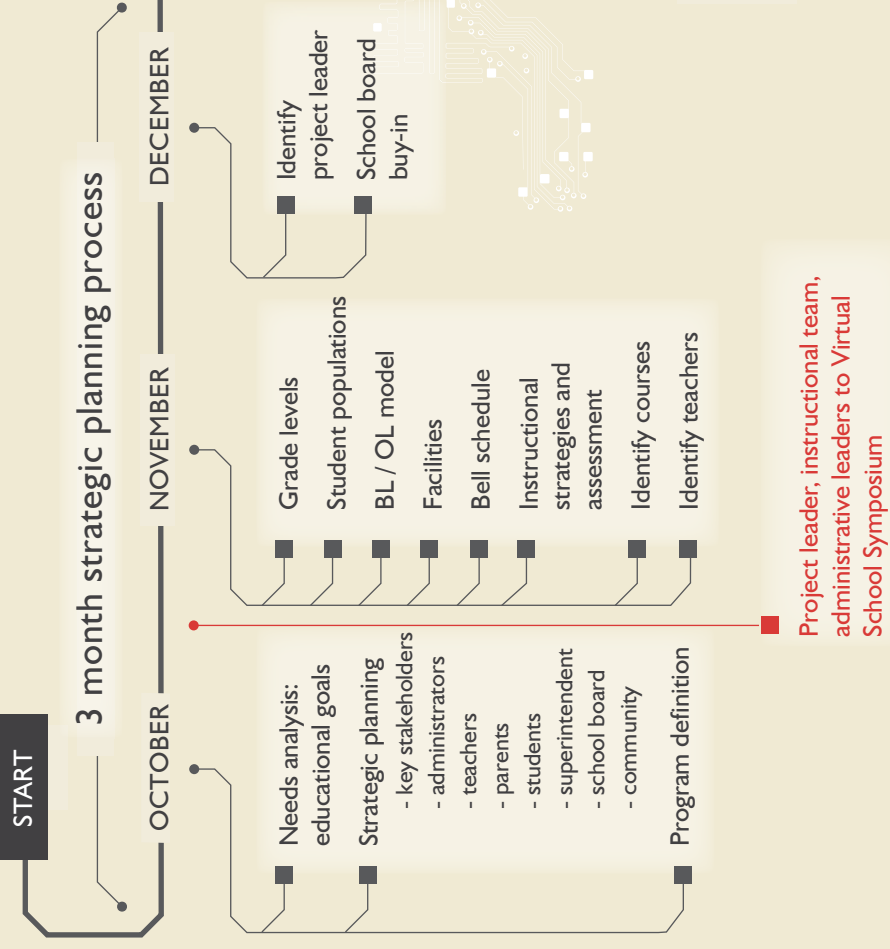


DEVELOPING AN ONLINE OR BLENDED PROGRAM USING PROVIDER-SUPPLIED COURSES & DISTRICT TEACHING

12 MONTH TIMELINE  page 1 of 2

This 12-month project timeline presents key milestone events leading to the launch of a blended or online learning program. This example assumes that the district or other local education agency will purchase or license courses from an outside provider while utilizing local teachers as instructors in those courses. Beginning with a three-month strategic planning process, this timeline organizes key events using the Four Focus Areas – Content, Teaching, Technology, and Operations. We present this timeline in 12 months, expecting that some programs will take more or less time to implement.

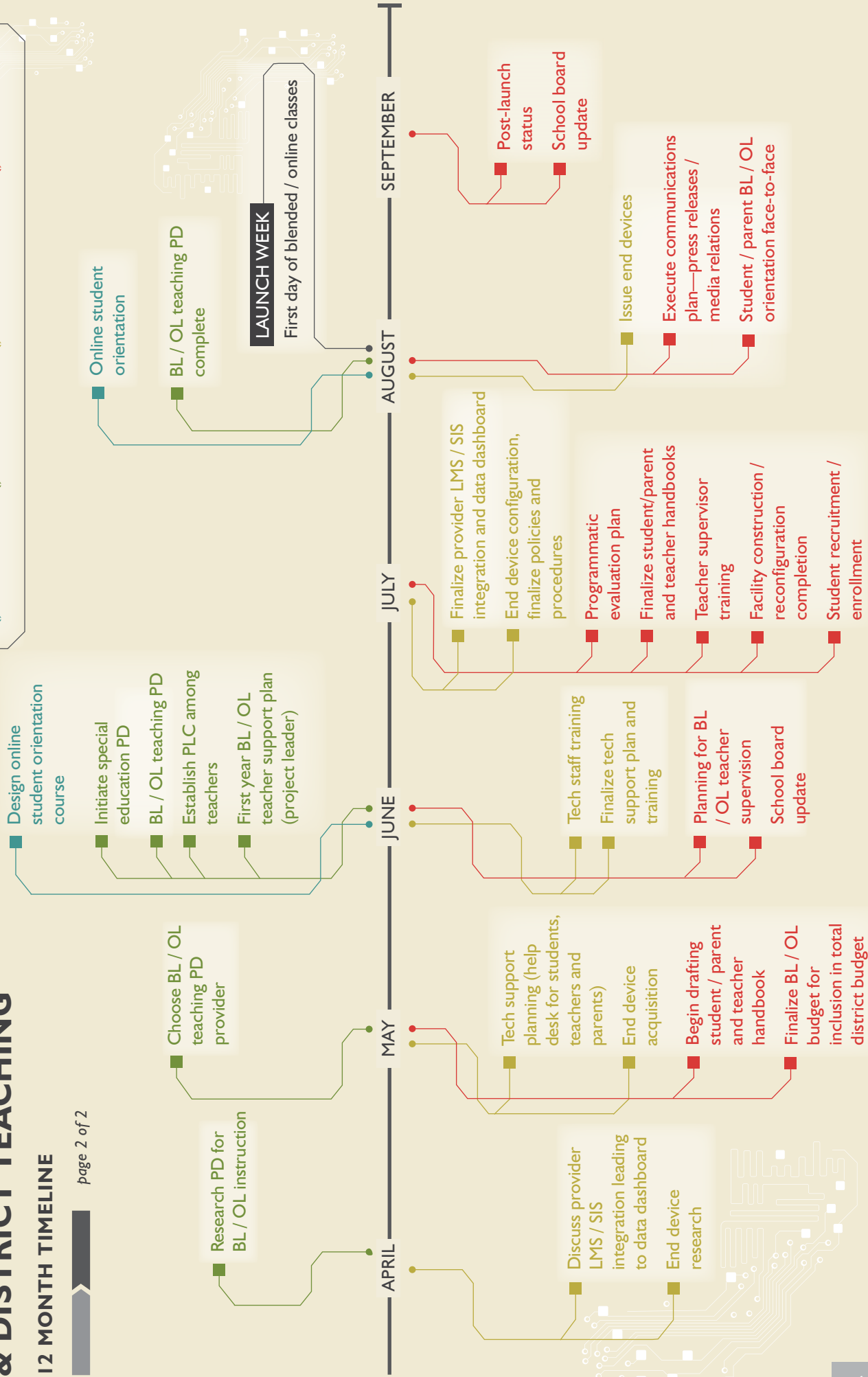
FOUR FOCUS AREAS



PROVIDER-SUPPLIED COURSES & DISTRICT TEACHING

12 MONTH TIMELINE

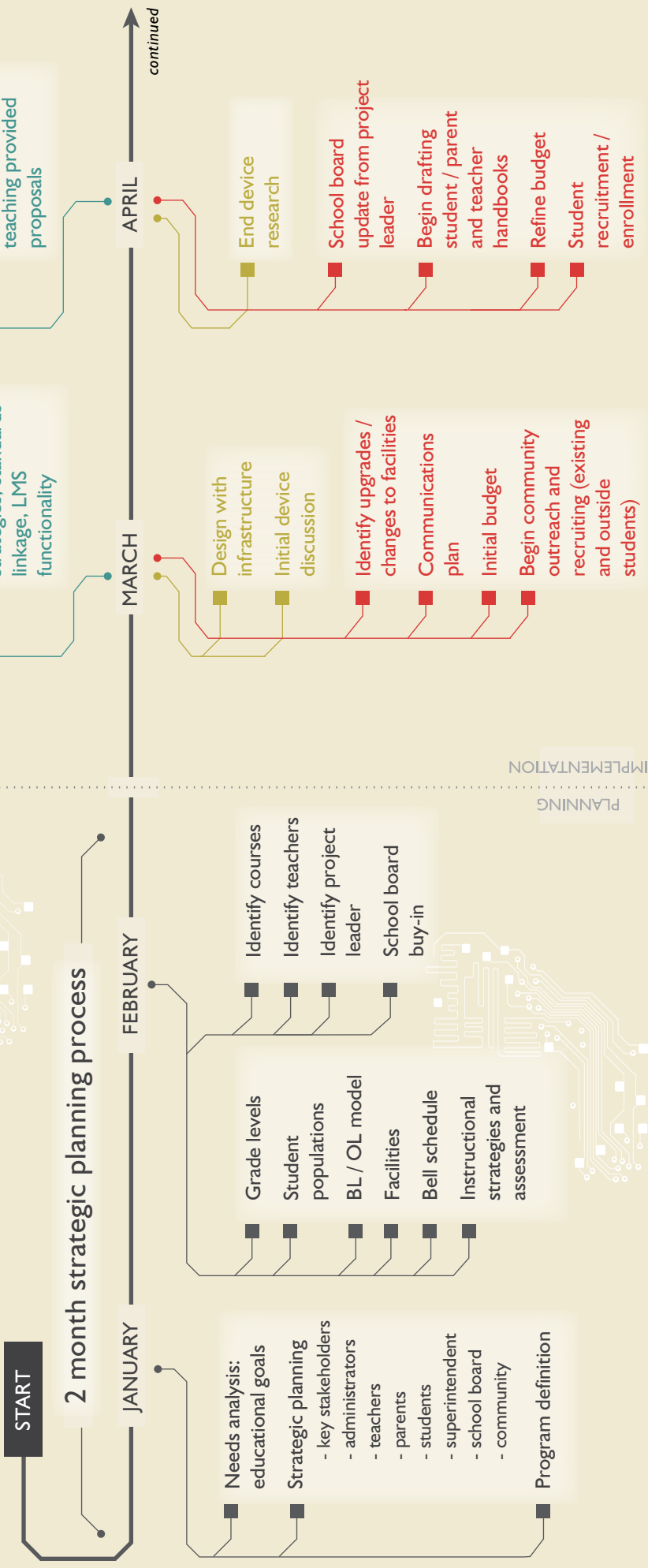
page 2 of 2



PROVIDER-SUPPLIED COURSES & TEACHING

9 MONTH TIMELINE

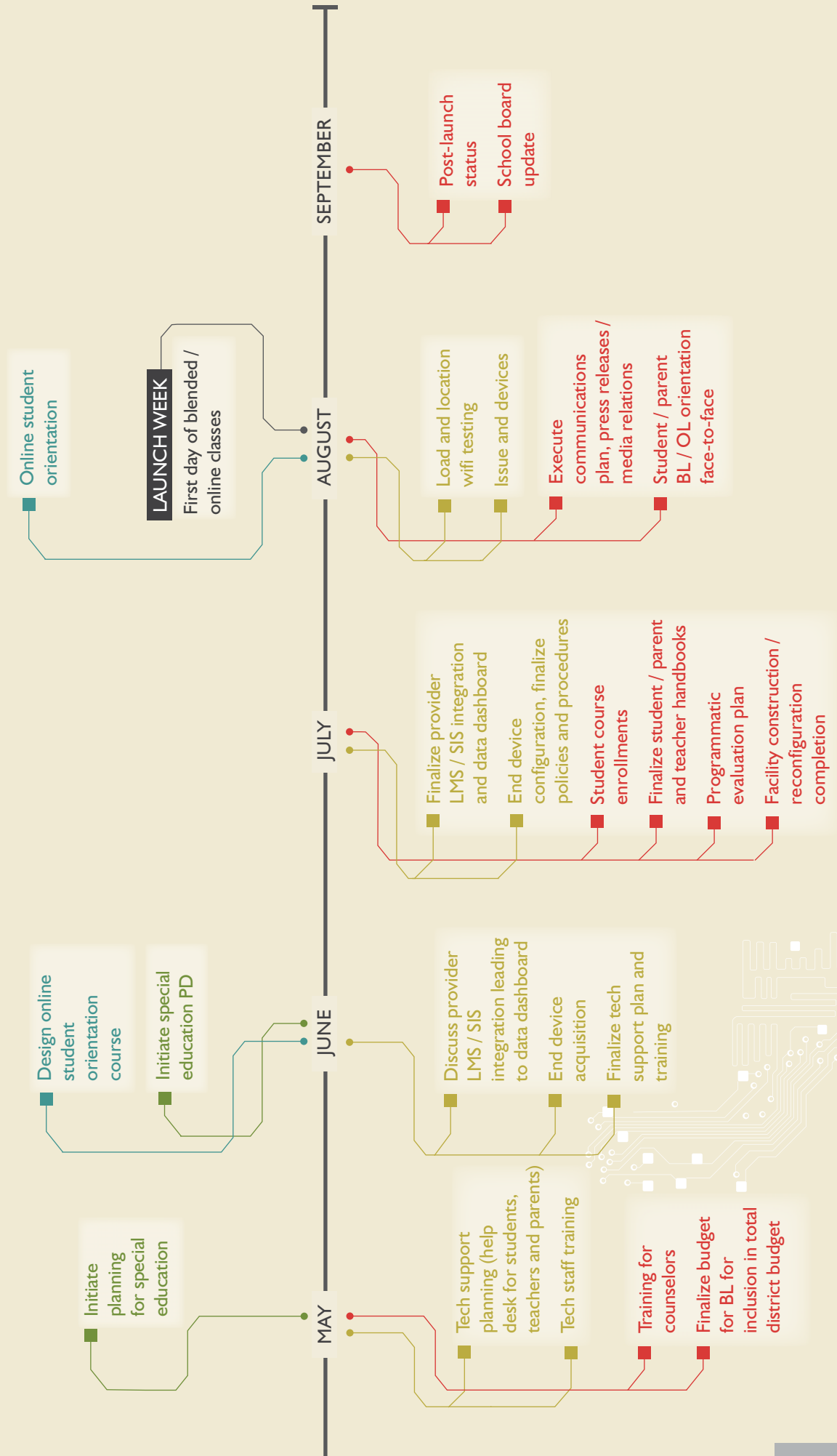
This 9-month project timeline presents key milestone events leading to the launch of a blended or online learning program. This example assumes that the district or other local education agency will purchase or license courses and instruction from an outsourced provider. Beginning with a two-month strategic planning process, this timeline organizes key events using the Four Focus Areas – Content, Teaching, Technology, and Operations. We present this timeline in 9 months, expecting that some programs will take more or less time to implement.



PROVIDER-SUPPLIED COURSES & TEACHING

9 MONTH TIMELINE

page 2 of 2



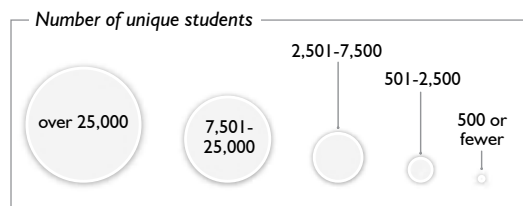
State profiles

The state profiles that follow capture an overview of key programs and policies in each state. Major laws pertaining to online learning are detailed, particularly those that passed in 2012. For some states that have had extensive policy activity over several years, the history and additional details are provided on the *Keeping Pace* website at www.kpk12.com/states/.

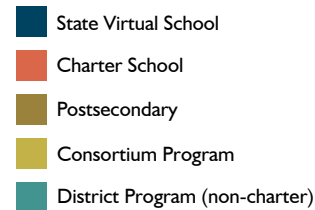
Each profile starts with a state snapshot of online learning activity as of the 2011-12 school year. On the right side of the snapshot, bulleted text offers items of note about each state.

The left side of the snapshot provides a graphical representation of programs in the state. It shows the following elements:

Program size, in categories, based on the number of unique students in the program

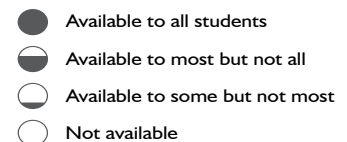


Program type



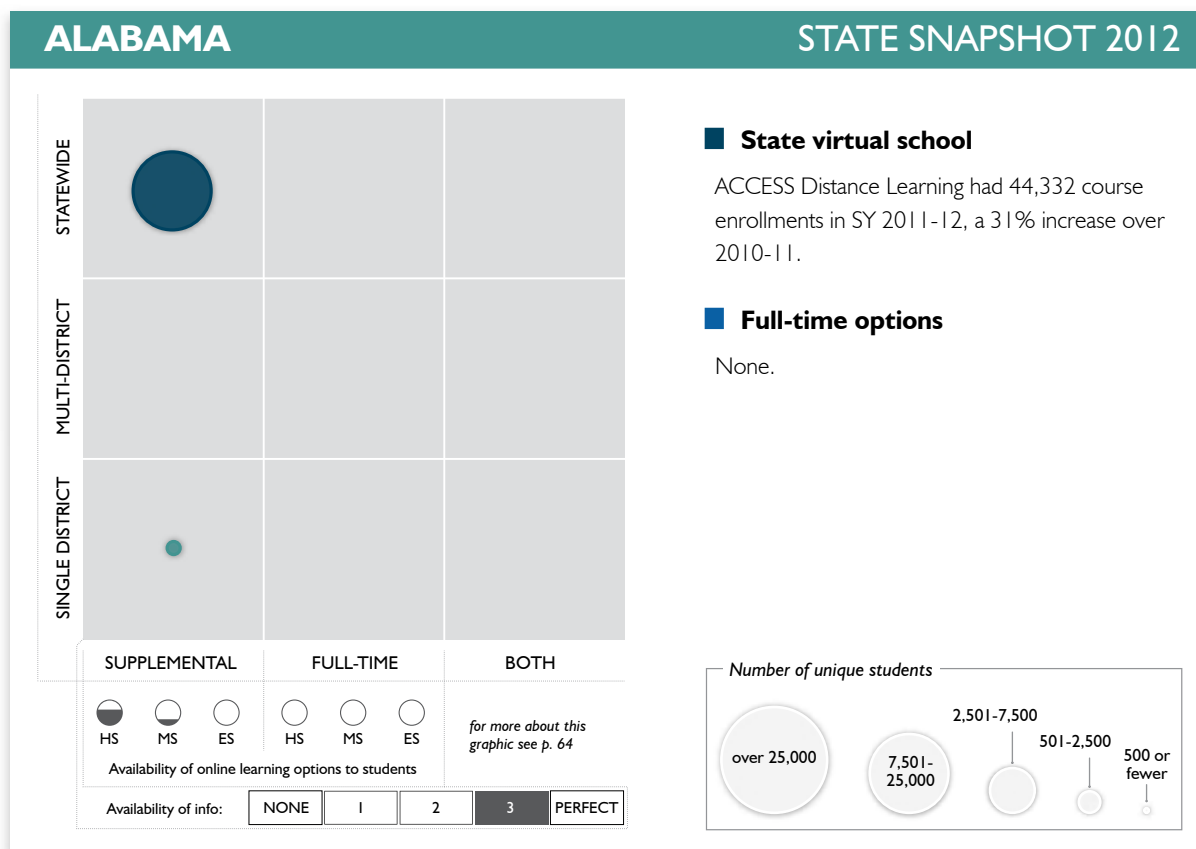
Programs are placed on a grid to show whether they operate in a single district, multiple districts, or statewide, and whether they are supplemental, full time, or both. Placement within a square of the grid does not convey meaning. The snapshot demonstrates the very different landscapes in different states. Alabama, for example, has one program, which is large and supplemental. Arizona has many operating statewide. California has many, but none operating statewide.

Full-time blended schools are included in the graphic for the first time in 2012. They are identified as full-time single-district schools, under the assumption that they are pulling from a small geographical area due to the face-to-face component of the program.



Below the grid is an assessment of opportunities available to students across the state. These are the same ratings collected for all states in Table 1; a full explanation of how the ratings were created is given on p. 14.

At the bottom of the snapshot is a rating for the availability of information in the state. It acknowledges there is likely activity happening that we don't know about, or for which data are not available. This is our assessment of the "known unknowns." We recognize that our assessments may be off, and it is likely that we are missing "unknown unknowns," especially activity at the district level.



Essentially all the online education activity in Alabama is through the state virtual school, ACCESS (Alabama Connecting Classrooms, Educators, & Students Statewide) Distance Learning. Alabama does not have a charter school law. In 2008, Alabama became the second state to establish an online learning requirement.

In 2012, HB165⁴⁷, the Alabama Ahead Act, made Alabama one of the first states to provide both digital textbooks and tablet devices for students and teachers. HB165 calls for the state to provide “all students in the public school grades 9-12, where available, approved textbooks and instructional materials ... in electronic format.” It also calls for grade 9-12 students and teachers to be issued “pen-enabled tablet computers for storing, reading, accessing, exploring, and interacting with digital textbooks ... in lieu of hardbound textbooks.” The legislation allows the Alabama Public School and College Authority to issue up to \$100 million in bonds to pay for the program.⁴⁸ The law phases in the assignment of tablet devices over a four-year period and tasks the State Department of Education (SDE) with developing an implementation plan and providing oversight for the program. The implementation plan will provide “specifications for devices; a learning management system; maintenance and support requirements of the electronic devices authorized in this act; current readiness of participating schools’ wireless networks; professional development for teachers.” The plan, due by October 1, 2012, will establish an application process for local school boards to participate in the program.

ACCESS is a supplemental program that started in fall 2005 and had 44,332 course enrollments in SY 2011-12, a 31% increase over 2010-11. ACCESS also had about 6,600 additional non-credit

⁴⁷ HB165 (2012); retrieved May 25, 2012, <http://alisondb.legislature.state.al.us/acas/SearchableInstruments/2012RS/PrintFiles/HB165-enr.pdf>

⁴⁸ Processes and procedures for the Alabama Public School and College Authority’s issuing and sale of bonds, payments to suppliers, and its interaction with the State Department of Finance and the State Treasurer’s Office are detailed in HB165.

course enrollments in five remediation modules for the Alabama High School Graduation Exam that are available free to students. The ACCESS state appropriation for 2012-13 is \$18,516,242, a decrease of \$162,716 from 2011-12. The FY 2013 budget includes \$10,000 earmarked for an online textbook study. Students take ACCESS courses from delivery school sites during set time periods.⁴⁹

The online learning requirement mandated by the state board stated that “beginning with the ninth grade class of 2009-10 (graduating class of 2012-13), students shall be required to complete one online/technology enhanced course or experience in either a core course (mathematics, science, social studies, or English), or an elective with waivers being possible for students with a justifiable reason(s).”⁵⁰ The SDE published guidelines⁵¹ on the essential characteristics of a quality online learning experience, specific course standards to meet the graduation requirement, and guidelines for online teachers.

In 2010, Alabama created a limited allowance⁵² for each student in grades 9-12 to receive one credit based on mastery of the content without specified instructional time. The seat-time waiver applies to all delivery methods.

Alabama has delayed a move away from a graduation test to end-of-course exams and an ACT testing requirement for 11th graders until 2012-13.

State policies

Other than HB165, state policies did not change significantly in 2011-12 and are available at www.kpk12.com/states/.

⁴⁹ AAC Rule 290-3-1-.02(12); retrieved May 22, 2012, <http://www.alabamaadministrativecode.state.al.us/docs/ed/290-3-1.pdf>

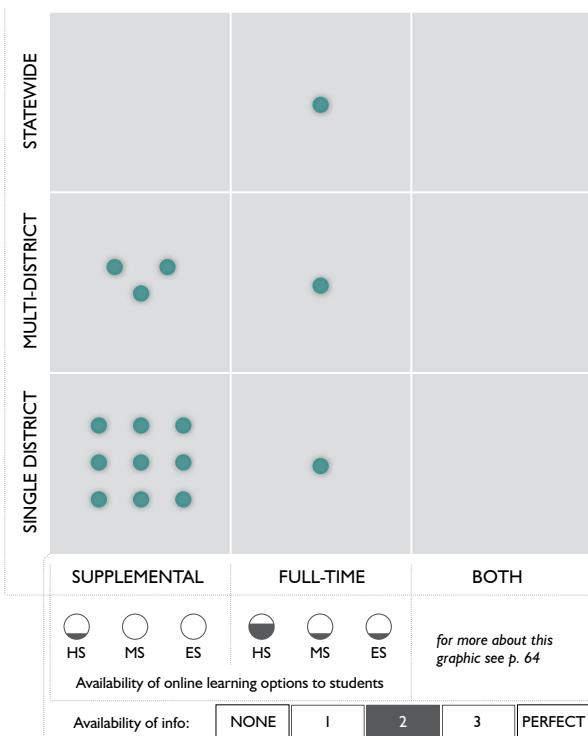
⁵⁰ Alabama State Code, 290-3-1-.02-(8)(d)4; retrieved May 22, 2012, <http://www.alabamaadministrativecode.state.al.us/docs/ed/290-3-1.pdf>

⁵¹ High School Distance Learning: Online/Technology Enhanced Course or Experience Guidance; retrieved August 22, 2012, <ftp://ftp.alsde.edu/documents/61/OnlineGuidance.pdf>

⁵² Alabama State Code, p. 3-1-39; retrieved June 12, 2012, <http://www.alabamaadministrativecode.state.al.us/docs/ed/290-3-1.pdf>

ALASKA

STATE SNAPSHOT 2012



State virtual school

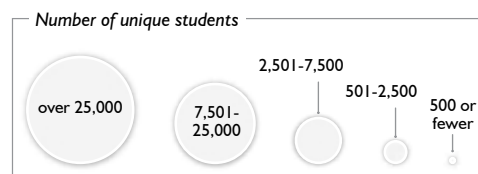
Alaska's Learning Network (AKLN), launched in 2011, is a consortium that offers courses, professional development, and digital resources to all districts in the state.

Online programs

29 district and charter programs—14 operating statewide—offer a variety of distance learning options.

Full-time options

85 students served in one fully online program.



Alaska has offered a variety of distance (not always online) options to its students for many years. The 2011 launch of Alaska's Learning Network (AKLN) sought to bring together the distance programs scattered around the state to expand course options to all Alaska students.

The state-led initiative was established with \$1.2 million of Enhancing Education Through Technology (E2T2) funds in late 2010. A December 2011 evaluation of AKLN's first year identifies three distinct components in place: "A Master Schedule of courses for secondary students; technology-related professional development for educators; and a Digital Sandbox repository for curriculum, lessons, and instructional resources."⁵³ The work included the creation of 15 courses aligned to Alaska Content Standards and the Alaska Grade Level Expectations. In SY 2011-12, about 155 students were served with 175 course enrollments.

Plans called for continued course development and training, and initial state budget plans included an additional \$1.2 million for AKLN, but all monies were cut from the final budget. It is now operating with \$150,000 for SY 2012-13. AKLN is managed by the Alaska Council of School Administrators, and overseen by the state's director of technology with one administrative assistant to manage registration, grades, and billing.⁵⁴ Districts pay \$300-325 for each student's course enrollment, though still receive the full FTE from the state. A 15-member advisory board represents five regions of the state.

⁵³ Alaska's Learning Network Grant Project Evaluation; retrieved June 6, 2012, http://roxymourant.files.wordpress.com/2011/12/appendix_a_alaska_dec2011.pdf, p. 3; The Digital Sandbox is at www.aklearn.net/resources

⁵⁴ Personal communications with Alaska's Learning Network; June 8, 2012

Online programs

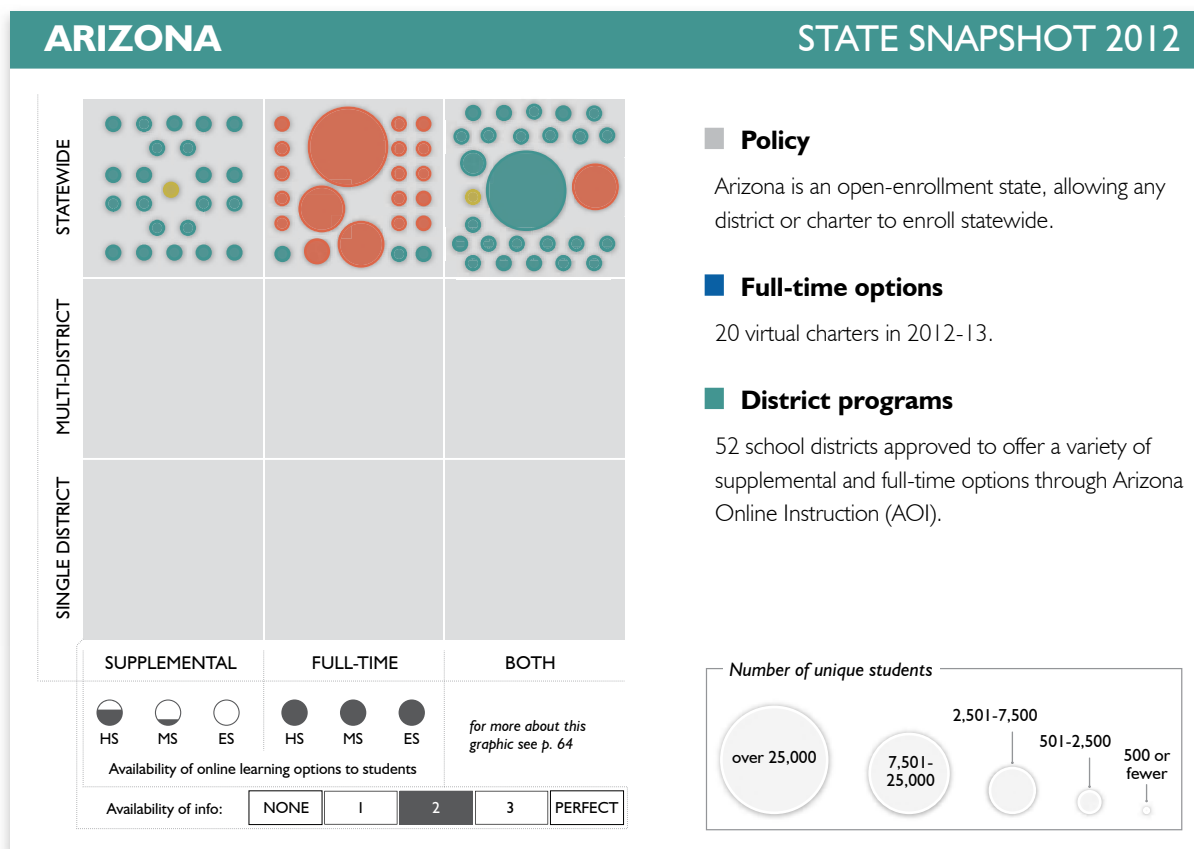
Alaska Virtual Academy, managed by K12 Inc., grew from 47 full-time K-8 students in SY 2010-11 to 85 in SY 2011-12. The Delta Cyber School, which offered an online public school open to all Alaskan students ages 5-19 closed at the end of SY 2011-12 after three years of steadily declining enrollments.

The state listing of Correspondence Schools⁵⁵ includes 29 programs excluding the Delta Cyber School. Thirteen are statewide programs, and these are a mix of full-time and supplemental programs, with the majority offering some online resources. The Alaska Virtual Academy is the only school on the list that is a fully online school serving students statewide.

State policies

Districts receive 80% of the standard base per-pupil funding for all students served in a correspondence program based on the number of courses toward the student's full-time schedule; distance programs, however, are not eligible for other funds. Through AKLN, a district will be able to enroll its students in online and blended courses that do not affect the per-student formula funding provided. Additional state policy information related to online learning is available at www.kpk12.com/states/.

⁵⁵ Alaska Department of Education & Early Development, Correspondence Program Directory; retrieved June 6, 2012, http://www.eed.state.ak.us/Alaskan_Schools/corres/pdf/Correspondence_School_Directory.pdf



Arizona has many districts and charter schools providing both full-time and supplemental online options. It does not have a state virtual school; however, Mesa Distance Learning provides a full-time option and supplemental courses (including teachers) to 36 districts in Arizona as well as out-of-state districts.

Online learning policy can be found in Arizona Revised Statutes (ARS) 15-808.⁵⁶ What started as the Technology Assisted Project-Based Instruction (TAPBI) pilot program evolved into the Arizona Online Instruction (AOI) program in 2009; the history of that transition can be found at www.kpk12.com/states/. Any district or charter school in the state can apply to start an online program, and all approved programs can serve any student in the state. Any student can apply to any approved provider in the state (and to multiple providers) for individual courses or whole programs, as long as the provider has capacity to serve that student. The number of approved programs has expanded dramatically, from 36 in 2010-11 to 72 in 2012-13.

A major online learning bill that passed the legislature was vetoed by the governor in May 2012. SB1259 would have made it easier for students to take online courses, instructed the state department of education to create a master list of approved courses, and required students to have all online class final exams proctored.⁵⁷

There are 52 approved district and 20 charter options for students to choose from in 2012-13. In 2011-12, 71 programs served an estimated 39,000 students in full- and part-time programs;⁵⁸ state reporting identifies unique students enrolled in any distance learning program, but does not distinguish between students enrolled in full- or part-time programs. The ADE publishes a catalog of some of the online courses available to K-12 students.

⁵⁶ ARS 15-808; retrieved May 30, 2012, <http://www.azleg.gov/FormatDocument.aspx?inDoc=/ars/15/00808.htm&Title=15&DocType=ARS>

⁵⁷ SB1159 (2012); retrieved June 5, 2012, http://www.azleg.gov/FormatDocument.aspx?inDoc=/legtext/50leg/2r/bills/sb1259o.asp&Session_ID=107

⁵⁸ Arizona 2011-12 enrollment data not yet available; 39,000 is an estimated based on growth in similar states.

Mesa Distance Learning Program was one of the first online programs in the state and is by far one of the largest. It served 988 full-time and 11,953 part-time students for a total of 12,941 unique students in SY 2011-12, an increase of 15% from the previous year.⁵⁹ Mesa delivered 25,189 courses to both full- and part-time students in 2011-12, an increase of 15% from the previous year. Sixty percent of Mesa's students were from outside the Mesa district boundaries.

AOI allows any of the state's 227 districts and 500-plus charter schools to apply to offer online courses to any student statewide. Public school districts apply to the State Board of Education (SBE); charter schools apply to the Arizona State Board of Charter Schools (ASBCS). As of April 2012, 52 public school districts were approved, nine of which were authorized to serve students beginning in kindergarten; the remaining programs typically serve high school students.⁶⁰ In addition, there were 20 virtual charter schools as of August 2012, most of which serve students in grades K-12.⁶¹ Students may take up to three courses from supplemental providers; a full-time online school provides four or more courses to a student at a given time. Additional enrollment information for AOI schools can be found at www.kpk12.com/states/.

The state superintendent's office is leading a Transformative Schools Initiative that partners with districts throughout the state to help them create dynamic models of blended learning to solve educational challenges. As of summer 2012, the office is reviewing digital content and working with pilot programs in Yuma, Tucson, and Phoenix.

State policies

State policies are based on SB1996, modifying ARS 15-808. In addition, HB2129⁶² (2010) changed the definitions of full- and part-time students. Funding details of note include:

- Online schools receive funding at 85% of the normal base support level for part-time students and 95% of the normal base support level for full-time students.
- FTE funding follows the student and may be split between an AOI school and another charter school or district based on the attendance data that determines the percentage of ADM the student spends in each school.⁶³
- Programs must maintain a daily student log describing the amount of time spent by each pupil on academic tasks.
- Virtual charter schools receive funding based on current-year enrollments (ARS 15-185-B-2),⁶⁴ whereas virtual public schools receive funding based on prior-year enrollments (ARS 15-901-A-13).

As of July 1, 2010, schools participating in AOI must provide an annual report describing the program and how student achievement will be measured. Schools also must survey students annually and include survey information in their reports. The SBE and ASBCS deliver individual reports to the ADE for review; a compilation of all reports is then presented to the governor and legislature on November 15 of each year.

Students must participate in state assessments. If a student does not take the state assessment and the school has less than 95% participation in the assessments, the student may not continue in the online program.

⁵⁹ Personal communication with Dr. Doug Barnard, Executive Director, Mesa County Online; August 21, 2012

⁶⁰ AOI and list of approved districts; retrieved August 23, 2012, <http://www.azed.gov/state-board-education/files/2012/04/list-of-aoi-districts-2012.pdf>

⁶¹ List of virtual charters; retrieved August 23, 2012, <http://www.asbcs.az.gov/userfiles/Distance%20Learning%20Schools%20List%20Revised%20format%209-19-11.pdf>

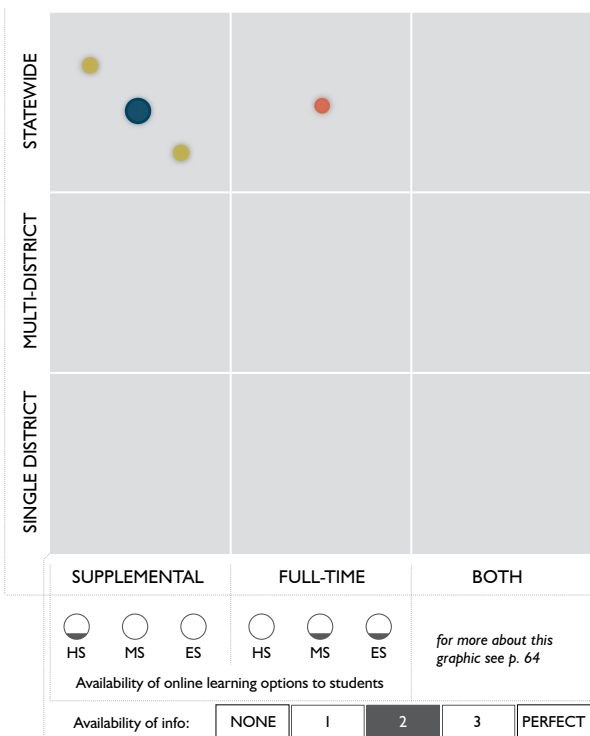
⁶² HB2129; retrieved May 29, 2012, <http://www.azleg.gov/legtext/49leg/2r/bills/hb2129s.pdf>

⁶³ FTE funding; retrieved June 13, 2012, http://www.azauditor.gov/ASD/PDF/Charter_Schools/USFRCS_Memo_%202083.pdf

⁶⁴ ARS 15-185; retrieved July 23, 2012, <http://www.azleg.gov/FormatDocument.asp?inDoc=ars/15/00185.htm&Title=15&DocType=ARS>

ARKANSAS

STATE SNAPSHOT 2012



■ State virtual school

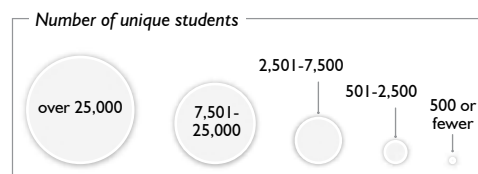
Arkansas Virtual High School served 3,000 enrollments in 2011-12.

■ Full-time options

Arkansas Virtual Academy, the only statewide full-time option, received a favorable academic evaluation from the University of Arkansas. It serves grades K-8.

■ Consortium

The five programs in the Arkansas K-12 Distance Learning Consortium (ARDL) had about 12,000 course enrollments in 2011-12, including 3,000 from AVHS.



Arkansas has a state virtual school (Arkansas Virtual High School or AVHS) that is a member of the new Arkansas Distance Learning (ARDL) Consortium, and one fully online statewide charter school, the Arkansas Virtual Academy (ARVA). The ARDL consortium served 12,000 students in 2011-12.⁶⁵ Arkansas school districts pay a \$2,500 annual membership fee to schedule courses with any of the state-funded providers. The fee allows unlimited enrollment on a first-come/first-serve basis. In addition, the consortium streamlines policies and procedures statewide, coordinates a master schedule, and centralizes billing for school districts.

The ARDL Consortium includes five providers:

- AVHS has been the state virtual school since spring 2000. It served a total of 3,000 supplemental online course enrollments in 2011-12, a 4% decrease from the previous year and a 40% overall decrease from 2009-10. AVHS is funded through an annual ADE grant. After two years of reduced funding, it received \$795,000 in funding in 2012-13.
- Arkansas Department of Education Distance Learning Center delivers 39 courses synchronously using compressed interactive video (CIV).
- Arkansas Early College High School (AECHS) offers three synchronous courses using CIV.
- Dawson Center for Distance Learning offers 30 synchronous courses to students in grades 9-12 using CIV.
- The Office of Distance Education at the Arkansas School of Mathematics, Sciences & the Arts offers 60 synchronous courses to students in grades K-12 using CIV.

ARVA is an open-enrollment, K-12 Inc. public charter school overseen by the Arkansas State Board of Education. It serves grades K-8 across the state, is limited by its charter to 500 unique students,

⁶⁵ ARDL; retrieved August 20, 2012, <http://ardl.k12.ar.us/Pages/Default.aspx>; enrollment information received through personal communication with Arkansas Education Service Cooperative, June 13, 2012

and maintains a waiting list. As of spring 2012 the list included about 1,000 students. There were 626 applicants for 22 openings in SY 2012-13.⁶⁶ As a charter school, ARVA must adhere to charter school accountability rules, including administration of all state-mandated testing.

ARVA operates as its own school district and is funded through the same student average daily membership (ADM) formula as other open-enrollment public charter schools. ARVA received \$6,144 per ADM for SY 2011-12, and it expects to receive \$6,267 in 2012-13.⁶⁷

The Internal Evaluation of the Arkansas Virtual Academy School by the University of Arkansas found that:

- Overall, ARVA students outperformed their comparison peers in math; the differences are substantial and statistically significant with an average increase of 9.6 percentile points. ARVA students outperformed their comparison peers in literacy; these differences were positive and substantial (+ 4 percentile points).
- These positive trends were apparent in nearly all grade cohorts, but were particularly driven by strong growth in math for the students in grade 6 in 2008-09 (an increase of 16 points) and in literacy for the students in grade 4 in 2008-09 (an increase of 11 points). These groups experienced large gains that were statistically significant.
- Economically disadvantaged students also did particularly well at ARVA; ARVA free- and reduced lunch-eligible students outperformed their comparison peers in math; the differences are substantial (+ 8 percentile points) and statistically significant. These differences in literacy were positive and substantial (+ 6 percentile points).

The study excluded first-year students to avoid data from “transition shocks” and matched each virtual student with two students from a traditional school.⁶⁸

State policies

Formal rules were published in 2005 covering AVHS and distance learning in Arkansas. These were updated with the Arkansas Department of Education Rules Governing Distance Learning released in February 2012.⁶⁹ The new rules establish guidelines requiring a calendar and bell schedule aligned with local schools to allow students to “optimally participate in synchronous distance learning and local courses.”

- The Arkansas Distance Learning Development Program, now known as the Arkansas Distance Learning Consortium, is to be conducted by the ADE and funded through donations, grants, or legislative appropriation. It is designed to help “alleviate the increasing shortage of available qualified teachers; provide additional course-scheduling opportunities for students ... ; provide an opportunity for students to access an enriched curriculum and additional courses ... ; and to develop and make available online professional development and instructional resources for all teachers and administrators.”
- All providers must be approved.
- “A public school district or open-enrollment public charter school that teaches or offers a distance learning course to one or more home-schooled or private school students ... shall be entitled to an amount equal to 1/6 of the state foundation funding amount for each course taught to a private school student or home-schooled student, up to the equivalent of one ADM per student.”

Provisions that remain unchanged from the 2005 rules are available, along with additional state policy history, at www.kpk12.com/states/.

⁶⁶ Personal communications with ARVA

⁶⁷ Personal communications with ARVA, June 19, 2012

⁶⁸ University of Arkansas, Internal Evaluation of the Arkansas Virtual Academy School, Ritter, Gary W.; retrieved May 31, 2012, <http://www.k12.com/sites/default/files/pdf/school-docs/ARVA-2012-UArk-Evaluation.pdf>

⁶⁹ Arkansas Department of Education Rules Governing Distance Learning, retrieved May 31, 2012, <http://170.94.37.152/REGS/005.15.12-001F-12833.pdf>

CALIFORNIA

STATE SNAPSHOT 2012



■ Full-time options

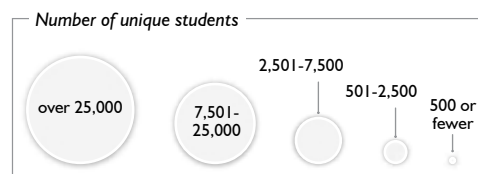
Full-time charter schools can only serve students in contiguous counties.

■ Districts

Growing programs in districts such as Riverside and Los Angeles are represented in the graphic; other programs for which data are unavailable are not included.

■ Blended

The California eLearning Census identified 86,257 students participating in blended learning in SY 2011-12.



Online and blended learning activity is expanding in California, primarily at the local and regional levels. The California Department of Education (CDE) has identified more than 90 online charter schools and district online programs; these include the California Virtual Academies, a network of nine online charter schools affiliated with K12 Inc.; as well as schools affiliated with Connections Academy and Advanced Academics.⁷⁰ California has just begun to collect student enrollment data at a state level using the California Basic Education Data System. It reports 36,034 students taking one or more online classes, and 12,094 students taking more than 50% of their classes online; however, CDE believes these numbers to be low.⁷¹ The California eLearning Census taken in spring 2012 reports that 23,228 students are enrolled in full-time online programs, equal to .37% of the K-12 public school student population.⁷²

Online programs

The California Learning Resource Network (CLRN), a statewide education technology service of the CDE that is administered by the Stanislaus County Office of Education, sought to better understand the full-time virtual and blended learning landscape in California. In March 2012, CLRN distributed the eLearning Census to 933 California public school districts and 701 direct-funded charters; it received 481 responses. Key findings include:

- 45% of districts and direct-funded charters reported having students participate in online learning, though in the majority the total number of students was still relatively small.

⁷⁰ CDE is working to identify all schools and programs in the state that deliver at least 30% of their instruction online. It launched a searchable map in October 2011 that tags synchronous, asynchronous, and blended learning programs, as well as public, private, and charter programs. It is available at <http://www2.cde.ca.gov/coep/imagemap.aspx>.

⁷¹ California Basic Education Data System, online enrollment data; retrieved August 2, 2012, <http://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/DQ/EducOpt.aspx?TheYear=2011-12&TheRpt=StAltEd&cLevel=State&cTopic=Enrollment&rCode=2&CDSCode=00000000000000>

⁷² California eLearning Census; <http://clrn.org/census/>

- Of districts and direct-funded charters whose students were not participating in online learning, 33% report they are planning to pilot or implement online learning.
- The total number of students participating in full-time online schools and blended learning opportunities was 106,077.

A growing number of districts and charter schools offer blended, supplemental, and/or full-time options to students. Riverside Virtual School (RVS) offers comprehensive online and blended-learning programs within and beyond the Riverside Unified School District (RUSD), serving 1,727 course enrollments for full-time students (a 59% increase) and 2,958 supplemental course enrollments (a 46% increase), for a total of 4,685 course enrollments during SY 2011-12. RUSD is one of the few districts in the country that tracks blended learning enrollments, serving 17,805 enrollments in SY 2011-12, an increase of 52%. In addition, RUSD has provided roughly 25,000 devices (tablets, netbooks, etc.) to students, reaching 57% of its student population, and has Bring Your Own Device and Open Access policies that allow the remaining students to bring technology onto campus for use in and outside of the classroom.⁷³ Additional online and blended programs include:

- The Los Angeles Unified School District had more than 5,000 course enrollments in online credit recovery programs in SY 2011-12 and the City of Angels Virtual Academy is an alternative high school that offers a full-time online option to about 50 students.
- Some programs, such as Pacific Coast High School, have formed consortia for sharing online courses developed by member schools.
- Innovative blended learning charter school models are taking root in California, including Rocketship Education, which enrolled 2,400 students in five elementary schools in the San Jose area in SY 2011-12 and has two additional schools opening in 2012, and the San Francisco and Silicon Valley Flex Academies, which enrolled 350 students in grades 6-12 in SY 2011-12.

In 2011, the California County Superintendents Educational Services Organization (CCSESA) released the California eLearning Framework, a guide for school districts and schools implementing online and blended learning opportunities for students. The framework examines the national landscape of eLearning and presents four key components of quality online and blended learning opportunities within a California context.⁷⁴

The California Online Learning Collaborative Subcommittee is funded and initiated by the CCSESA. It builds on the eLearning Framework to facilitate collaboration among county offices of education, school districts, and state-level organizations in their use and support of online learning including curriculum resources, technical guidance, advocacy, and professional development. Initially, these collaborations will include gathering and sharing information on purchases of curriculum/courses, learning management systems, and related technologies to assist California counties and districts as they grow their online programs.

The University of California Online Academy (UCOA) is a state-led initiative funded by Student Academic Preparation and Educational Partnerships. The curriculum builds on the work of UC College Prep, which has been supporting K-12 schools since 1999. UCOA offers Advanced Placement, honors, and “a-g” college preparation courses online. California public school teachers may choose to use UCOA’s courses at no cost to supplement existing curriculum, or as stand-alone courses.

State policies

Legislation guiding online and blended learning has not been updated in recent years; however, online programs in California are governed by a series of laws detailed at www.kpk12.com/states/.

⁷³ Personal communication with David Haglund, RUSD; August 28, 2012

⁷⁴ California eLearning Framework; retrieved August 23, 2012, http://www.ccsesa.org/index/attachments/eLearn_Framework.pdf

Online curricula may be presented either in a classroom setting or through independent study; the appropriate method of attendance accounting for such classes is dependent upon the instructional setting utilized. Guiding legislation includes:⁷⁵

- Independent study regulations for all non-classroom based instruction, including student-teacher ratios⁷⁶
- 2005 regulations allowed schools to avoid the student-teacher ratio provisions of the law.⁷⁷
- Charter school laws, some of which are specific to online programs (SB740, 2001)⁷⁸ and others that are not. Online charter schools are also governed by independent study provisions.

The University of San Diego Center for Educational Policy and Law published *A Summary of Existing and Pending Law Involving Online Learning in California Public Schools* in November, 2009, a helpful profile of legislation affecting online learning in California.⁷⁹

The California Learning Resource Network (CLRN) is a state-funded project that reviews supplemental electronic learning resources, data assessment tools, free web links, and digital textbooks for their alignment to California’s original content standards, the Common Core State Standards, and California’s social content criteria. In November 2010, CLRN collaborated with iNACOL and the Texas Virtual School Network to rewrite course criteria and reviewer considerations to be used by any eLearning program. The completed criteria and considerations, published in 2011, are the core criteria for CLRN’s online course reviews.⁸⁰ CLRN currently reviews high school online courses in the areas of English-language arts, history-social science, mathematics, science, and visual and performing arts. CLRN has begun to review world language courses.

The University of California (UC) and California State University (CSU) designed “a-g” policy standards⁸¹ that all courses must meet to satisfy the UC and CSU entrance requirements. In May 2012, the UC Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools (BOARS) released updated requirements for approval of K-12 online courses and programs.⁸² Based on those requirements, a specific policy for a-g review of online courses was released in August 2012.⁸³ Specifically, the policy states:

“UC will consider for ‘a-g’ review a course submitted by a content provider or a virtual school once it has been ‘CLRN-Certified,’ meaning that the course (1) meets at least 80% of the relevant content standards; (2) satisfies at least 80% of all iNACOL standards for quality online courses; and (3) fully satisfies a subset of the iNACOL course standards, referred to as ‘power standards.’”

A consortium of public and private agencies came together to fund the Leading Edge Certification alliance in an effort to address a perceived statewide need for professional development related to online learning. The project offers 21st century training programs for online teachers, classroom (blended learning) teachers, administrators, teacher librarians, and lead learners (course developers) seeking certification in digital skills.⁸⁴

⁷⁵ This section based on the report *The State of Online Learning in California: A Look at Current K-12 Policies and Practices*, published by the University of California College Prep Online, 2006; retrieved June 12, 2012, http://www.k12hsn.org/files/research/Online_Learning/SOLC.pdf

⁷⁶ Independent study requirements; retrieved June 12, 2012, <http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/eo/is/>

⁷⁷ California Administrative Code, Title 5, 11963.5; retrieved June 12, 2012, <http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cs/as/nclrbifunddet.asp>

⁷⁸ AB294; retrieved June 12, 2012, http://info.sen.ca.gov/pub/03-04/bill/asm/ab_0251-0300/ab_294_bill_20030909_enrolled.html

⁷⁹ *A Summary of Existing and Pending Law Involving Online Learning in California Public Schools*, University of San Diego; retrieved June 12, 2012, <http://www.sandiego.edu/soles/documents/CEPALOnlineLearningLegislation020810.pdf>

⁸⁰ California Learning Resource Network course review standards; retrieved July 12, 2012, <http://www.clrn.org/search/courseCriteria.cfm>

⁸¹ a-g policy website; retrieved June 12, 2012, http://www.ucop.edu/a-gGuide/ag/online_course.html

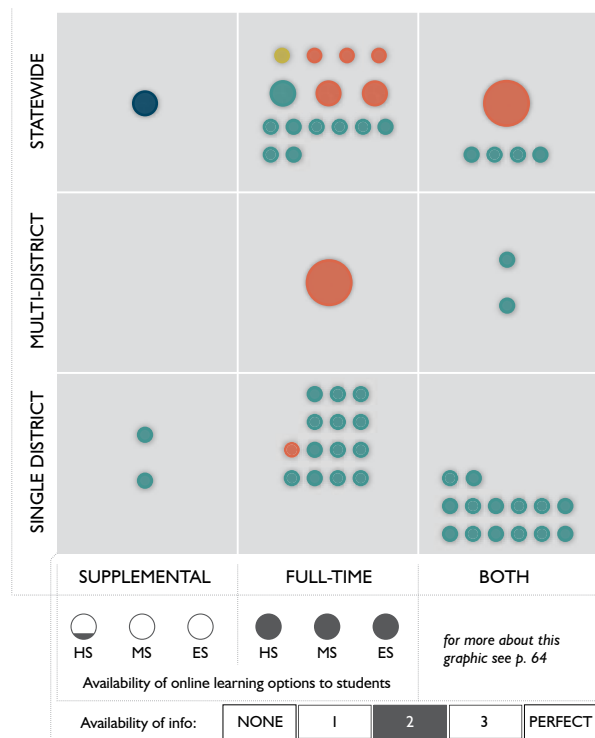
⁸² BOARS Statement on Online Learning; retrieved August 28, 2012, <http://www.ucop.edu/a-gGuide/ag/content/boars-statement-online-learning.pdf>

⁸³ University of California Policy for A-G Review of Online Courses; retrieved August 2, 2012, http://www.ucop.edu/a-gGuide/ag/online_course.html

⁸⁴ Leading Edge Certification; retrieved June 12, 2012, <http://www.cue.org/leadingedge>

COLORADO

STATE SNAPSHOT 2012



State virtual school

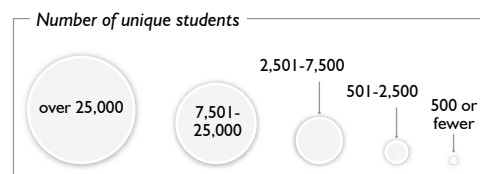
Colorado Online Learning served 1,574 course enrollments in SY 2011-12.

District programs

55 charter, single- and multi-district options.

Policy

Colorado Department of Education Unit of Online Learning reports on schools; HB11-1277 (2011) significantly reduced reporting requirements from annual to every five years.



Colorado has a state virtual school, numerous fully online programs operating across multiple districts, and district-level programs that are fully online and/or supplemental. The Colorado Department of Education (CDE) reported 16,221 unique students enrolled in full- and part-time programs in 2011-12, an increase of 6% from 2010-11.⁸⁵ CDE believes the significant majority of these enrollments are full time. CDE does not have a way to report students who are taking one supplemental online course. There are 55 programs recognized by the Unit of Online Learning as of August 2012: 24 multi-district schools, 12 single-district schools, and 15 single-district programs are authorized to serve full-time online students. In addition, three single-district supplemental programs serve students within their districts,⁸⁶ and Colorado Online Learning is the state virtual school. It reported 1,574 course enrollments in 2011-12, a 2% increase from the previous year.⁸⁷

From 2009-11, the CDE Unit of Online Learning (UOL) released its annual Summary Report of the Operations and Activities of Online Programs in Colorado,⁸⁸ which was among the best examples of online program activity reporting in any state. However, HB11-1277 (2011)⁸⁹ significantly reduced these reporting requirements; the next report will be released in 2014, and then every five years. Now, CDE collects online enrollment data from the October and end-of-year per-

⁸⁵ The source for enrollment data changed as of the 2010-11 school year. Previously, enrollment data were self-reported, but it is now available at the Colorado Department of Education website: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdereval/rv2011pmlinks.htm> via October count reporting (see Pupil Membership by Instructional Program). The 2011 enrollment number was adjusted down by 65 students since *Keeping Pace 2011* was published.

⁸⁶ Online programs; retrieved June 11, 2012, <http://www.cde.state.co.us/onlinelearning/schools.htm>

⁸⁷ Colorado Online Learning 2011-12 Yearly Evaluation Report; retrieved August 2, 2012, <http://www.coloradoonlinelearning.org/about/history-records.html>

⁸⁸ 2010-11 enrollment numbers were reported by the Colorado Department of Education Unit of Online Learning in the Summary Report of the Operations and Activities of Online Programs in Colorado, June 1, 2011; retrieved June 11, 2012, <http://www.cde.state.co.us/onlinelearning/reports.htm>.

⁸⁹ HB11-1277 (2011), sections 23-28 address online learning; retrieved June 11, 2012, http://www.leg.state.co.us/clics/clics2011a/csl.nsf/fsbillcont3/A58089DC75F0EAB18725780800800FD9?open&file=1277_enr.pdf

pupil revenue counts, as well as other collections throughout the year. Online enrollments are designated by full- and part-time students, so data are not available at a course level. The law also removed the time period for which certification of online schools is granted; they remain certified indefinitely until the UOL has reason to believe the program is not in substantial compliance with one or more of the statutory or regulatory requirements.

Much of Colorado's legislation related to online learning can be traced to an audit of fully online programs⁹⁰ released in December 2006 and the ensuing work of the Trujillo Commission.⁹¹ The result of those efforts was SB215 (2007), which created what is now known as the Office of Online Learning.

A second online education law, HB1037 (2007),⁹² provides \$480,000 annually to fund a BOCES to contract with a provider to offer online courses to school districts across the state for no more than \$200 per student per semester. Colorado Online Learning now functions as the state virtual school.

Details about both laws are available on the *Keeping Pace* website at www.kpk12.com/states/.

A series of 2012 bills affect online programs and students:

- HB12-1124 (2012) “directs the department of education to commission a study of the issues surrounding integration of digital learning into the statewide system of public education in Colorado.” The study will be completed and submitted to the state board of education, the governor, and the education committee of the General Assembly by January 31, 2013. The bill also includes definitions of on-line learning, digital learning, blended learning, and supplemental on-line courses.⁹³
- HB12-1240 (2012) states that if a program has more than 100 full- or part-time students, it has to apply for a school code.⁹⁴
- HB12-1212 (2012) clarifies that a BOCES can no longer authorize a single-district program; only a single district can authorize a single district online program.⁹⁵

In addition, the State Board of Education updated the quality standards for online programs in January 2012.⁹⁶ The rules were “amended to incorporate changes to financial reporting and accountability ... [and] to align the evaluation criteria for Online Programs with the evaluation criteria established by SB 09-163 (the Education Accountability Act of 2009).”

In summer 2012, the Colorado Department of Education released “Blended Learning in Rural Colorado: Status and Strategies,” which shares best practices and findings from interviews and a survey of rural leaders about blended learning.⁹⁷ The report identifies barriers to and recommendations for expansion of blended learning, including increasing broadband access, providing exemplar case studies from around the state, and addressing funding inequities and outdated rules.

⁹⁰ Report of the State Auditor; retrieved June 11, 2012, [http://www.leg.state.co.us/OSA/coauditor1.nsf/All/6D2762978BB1D6DF8725723E005ED7D4/\\$FILE/1768%20Online%20Ed%20Perf%20rel%20Dec%202006.pdf](http://www.leg.state.co.us/OSA/coauditor1.nsf/All/6D2762978BB1D6DF8725723E005ED7D4/$FILE/1768%20Online%20Ed%20Perf%20rel%20Dec%202006.pdf)

⁹¹ The Trujillo Commission's report; retrieved June 11, 2012 <http://www.dkfoundation.org/trujillo-commission-online-education-final-report-2007>

⁹² HB1037; retrieved August 2, 2012, http://www.leg.state.co.us/CLICS/CLICS2010A/csl.nsf/fsbillcont3/584ABEF08DBB8FB4872576A80026B247?Open&file=1037_enr.pdf

⁹³ HB12-1124 (2012); retrieved August 2, 2012, <http://www.cde.state.co.us/onlinelearning/download/HB12-1124.pdf>

⁹⁴ HB1240 (2012); retrieved August 2, 2012, http://www.leg.state.co.us/clics/clics2012a/csl.nsf/fsbillcont3/A386D89EDA600136872579820026D8D7?Open&file=1240_enr.pdf

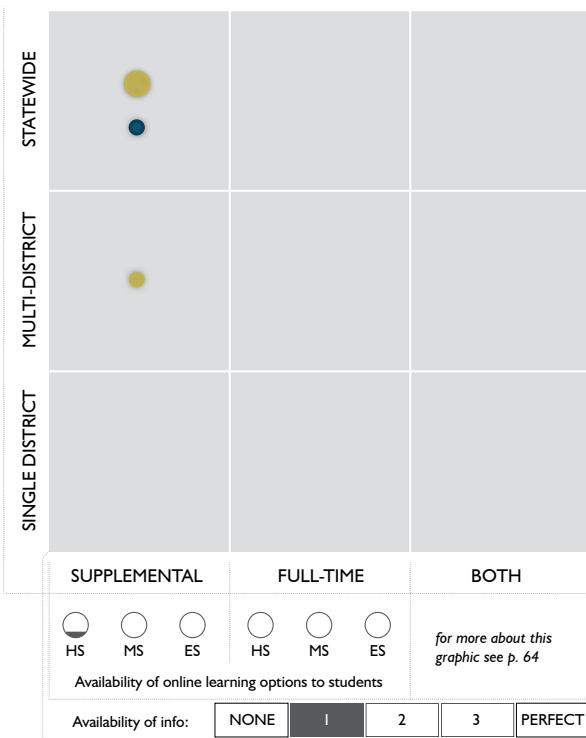
⁹⁵ HB12-1212 (2012); retrieved August 2, 2012, http://www.leg.state.co.us/clics/clics2012a/csl.nsf/fsbillcont/9CA5C3F1539AB57B8725798B0073AC0B?Open&file=1212_enr.pdf

⁹⁶ Rules for the Certification, Administration and Oversight of Online Programs; retrieved August 2, 2012, <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdegen/downloads/OnlinePrograms.pdf>

⁹⁷ *Blended Learning in Rural Colorado: Status and Strategies*; retrieved September 23, 2012, http://www.cde.state.co.us/onlinelearning/download/RuralBlendedLearning_Evergreen.pdf

CONNECTICUT

STATE SNAPSHOT 2012



■ Full-time options

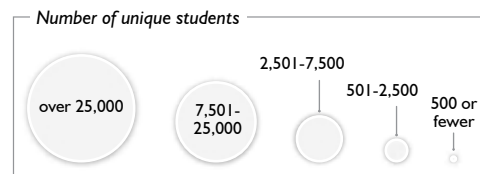
None.

■ State virtual schools

CT AVHS had 1,970 course enrollments in SY 2011-12, a 2% decrease; CTVLC had 189 course enrollments in SY 2011-12. Combined they served 2,049 course enrollments, a 7% decrease from the previous year.

■ District

The VHS Collaborative served 1,794 course enrollments through 83 member schools.



Connecticut has an adult virtual high school and a second small state virtual school that together served 2,049 course enrollments in 2011-12. Eighty-three schools are members of The VHS Collaborative, and there is minimal district activity, most of which is credit recovery developed in response to Public Act (PA) No. 10-111.⁹⁸

Connecticut passed its first online learning legislation in 2010 as part of the high school reform act, PA No. 10-111.⁹⁹ The act formally included online learning as an option for earning high school credit, as well as for middle school students taking high school courses for credit. For online courses to meet high school graduation requirements, a district board of education must adopt a policy for granting credit. The policy must ensure that online courses 1) require a workload equivalent to that of a similar course taught in a traditional classroom setting; 2) be “rigorous and aligned with curriculum guidelines”; 3) engage students and include interactive components, “which may include, but are not limited to, required interactions between students and their teachers, participation in online demonstrations, discussion boards or virtual labs”; 4) be taught by Connecticut teachers or teachers certified in another state, and who have “received training on teaching in an on-line environment.” The legislation does not require a district’s online policy be submitted to the State Department of Education (SDE); districts are each creating unique policies. There is no data reporting specific to online courses required by the SDE and no state review or approval of online course providers.

PA No. 10-111 also required districts with a dropout rate of 8% or higher to establish an online credit recovery program as of July 1, 2010. The law did not define “online credit recovery

⁹⁸ Public Act No. 10-111; retrieved May 24, 2012, <http://www.cga.ct.gov/2010/ACT/Pa/pdf/2010PA-00111-R00SB-00438-PA.pdf>

⁹⁹ Ibid

program,” leaving local districts to work within the parameters of section 10-221¹⁰⁰ of the general statutes. Each school in the school district must designate an online learning coordinator to administer the credit recovery program.¹⁰¹ Beginning in 2013, districts must provide student support and remedial services for students, including online learning options, beginning in 7th grade. The requirements of PA No. 10-111 currently have no formal monitoring process by the SDE. Districts are contracting independently with a wide range of online learning providers to deliver self-paced credit recovery options to meet the requirements.

Online programs

The Connecticut Distance Learning Consortium (CTDLC),¹⁰² an organization within the Department of Higher Education, operates two statewide online learning programs. The Connecticut Adult Virtual High School (CT AVHS) is a statewide online program that provides students enrolled in Connecticut’s Adult Credit Diploma Programs the option of earning credits online. This program is funded with Title II (Workforce Investment Act) dollars through the SDE’s Bureau of Adult Education. In 2011-12, the CT AVHS experienced a 13% budget cut; course enrollments have dropped steadily since 2009-10 to about 1,970 in SY 2011-12.

Connecticut Virtual Learning Center (CTVLC) is also operated by the CTDLC. CTVLC was launched by the SDE in 2008 to offer supplemental online courses to public high schools. CTVLC had 189 course enrollments in SY 2011-12, a decrease of 6% from 2010-11. Startup funding and two years of operational funding (for the 2007-08 and 2008-09 school years) were approved by the General Assembly, and CTVLC received funding of \$845,000 in its first year of operation, but the second year of funding was later retracted due to state budget constraints. Without an annual appropriation, CTVLC now offers courses for \$320 per semester course enrollment to all public school students (\$199 for credit recovery courses), and \$350 for private high school and homeschooled students (\$220 for credit recovery courses). Funding CTVLC exclusively through course fees has negatively impacted course enrollments. The CTDLC will continue to provide technology infrastructure and other operational support for the CTVLC program despite the budget cuts.

The Connecticut Regional Educational Service Center (RESC) has a partnership with The VHS Collaborative (VHS) to provide reduced-rate membership to school districts serving 83 middle and high schools. VHS had 1,794 course enrollments through these district memberships during 2011-12, a 29% increase over the previous year. In addition, the Virtual Learning Academy, an RESC program, offers online credit recovery and special needs courses for grades K-12. Courses are provided through student licenses for \$400 annually or \$250 for a three-month period; students can take as many courses as desired during that period.

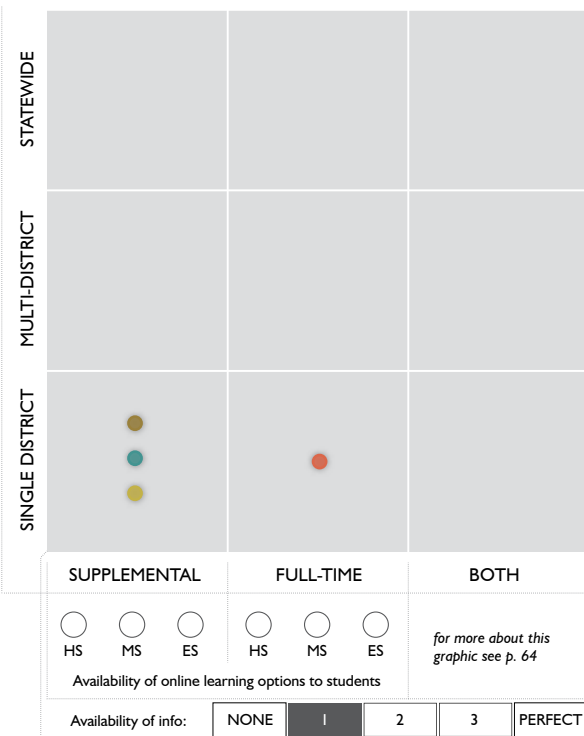
¹⁰⁰ Chapter 170, section 10-221; retrieved May 24, 2012, <http://www.cga.ct.gov/2011/pub/chap170.htm#Sec10-221.htm>

¹⁰¹ Ibid

¹⁰² The Connecticut Distance Learning Consortium (CTDLC) is a division of Charter Oak State College, established under the Board for State Academic Awards, and a member of the Connecticut Board of Regents of Higher Education.

DELAWARE

STATE SNAPSHOT 2012

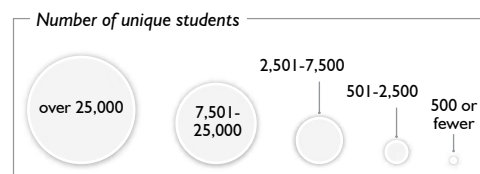


Districts

No major programs.

Postsecondary

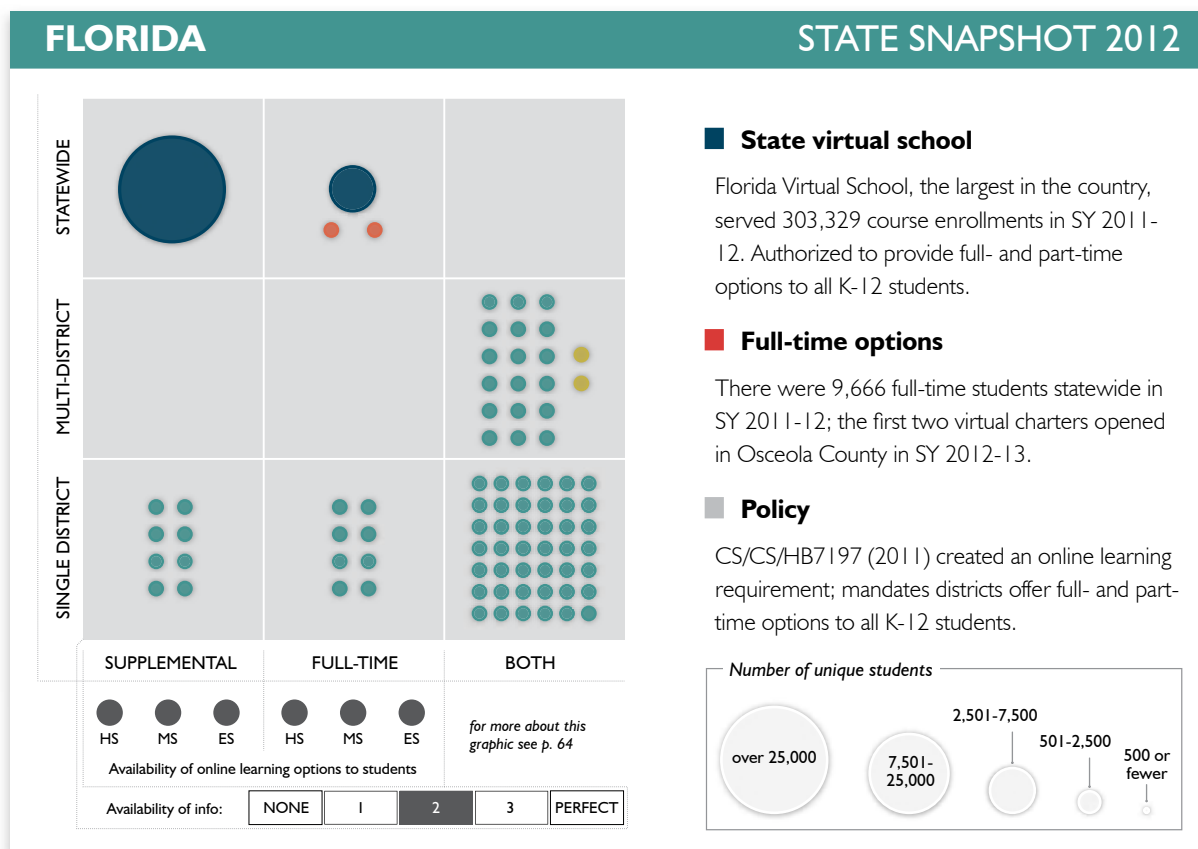
University of Delaware's Online High School provides dual enrollment courses for high school students across the state at a cost of \$545 per course.



Delaware has very little online and blended learning activity. Some districts use vendor courses on a limited basis, and some high schools participate in the University of Delaware's Online High School, which provides dual enrollment courses for high school students across the state at a cost of \$545 per course. The Department of Education offers an online World Language Program to provide Spanish and Mandarin Chinese courses for 1,200 7th grade students in the 2012-13 year.¹⁰³ One school, Moyer Academy, uses online curriculum from K12 Inc. in a blended environment, requiring the 116 students be at the school site every school day.¹⁰⁴ In January 2008, Delaware launched the Delaware Virtual School as a pilot program offering six online courses through 27 high schools and serving nearly 300 students, but the Virtual School's budget was subsequently cut. A limited version of the pilot program continued through the 2008-09 school year, but the program did not receive funding for 2009-10 and has not received funding since then.

¹⁰³ Online World Language Program RFP; retrieved June 6, 2012, www.doe.k12.de.us/rfp/MiddleSchOnlineLangLearnPrograms.doc

¹⁰⁴ Maurice J. Moyer Academy; retrieved May 29, 2012, <http://www.k12.com/participating-schools/delaware/1257>



Florida is the first state in the country to legislate that all K-12 students will have full- and part-time virtual options. HB7197 (2011) authorized full- and part-time options for students in grades K-12 through District/Virtual Course Offerings, and CS/CS/HB7063 (2012) allows Florida Virtual School (FLVS) to add part-time options for students in grades K-5. Florida has a long history of supporting online learning. In addition to district programs and fully online schools, Florida Virtual School is the largest state virtual school in the country. More students take online courses in Florida than in any other state, with more than 150,000 students taking part- and full-time online courses, including 303,329 course enrollments through FLVS.

Online options for students in Florida¹⁰⁵

Florida has a variety of online options for students in grades K-12 that are summarized in Table 7.¹⁰⁶ All of Florida's virtual schools and programs are designated by law as school choice options¹⁰⁷ for Florida families. Teachers in these programs must hold Florida teaching certificates, and the curriculum must meet state standards. In addition, 2011 legislation stated that virtual programs and courses must meet standards set by iNACOL and the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB). Full-time public school students participate in state assessments, and full-time schools and programs receive school grades through Florida's accountability system.

Florida Virtual School (FLVS) is the main supplemental provider. FLVS had 303,329 supplemental course enrollments in 2011-12, a 17% increase from 2010-11. In 2000, legislation

¹⁰⁵ Virtual education website; retrieved June 13, 2012, <http://www.fldoe.org/Schools/virtual-schools/>

¹⁰⁶ Table based on Florida's Public Virtual Education Options 2012-13; retrieved June 13, 2012, <http://www.fldoe.org/schools/virtual-schools/pdf/veof.pdf>

¹⁰⁷ School choice options; retrieved September 12, 2012, <http://info.fldoe.org/docshare/dsweb/Get/Document-5250/dps-2009-007.pdf>

established FLVS as an independent education entity. Legislation enacted in 2002 and 2003 granted parental rights for public school choice,¹⁰⁸ listed FLVS as an option, and defined full-time equivalent (FTE) students for FLVS based on “course completion and performance” rather than on seat time. The program has 1,175 full-time teachers and 237 part-time teachers. FLVS is governed by Florida Statute 1002.37;¹⁰⁹ students retain the right to choose FLVS courses to satisfy their educational goals.

FLVS runs a full-time online option, **FLVS FT**, operated in partnership with Connections Academy for grades K-12. The full-time online school served a total of 3,866 students, 278 in grades K-8.

Through the **Virtual Instruction Program**, all Florida school districts offer full-time and part-time virtual instruction programs for students in grades K-12. For some districts, franchises of FLVS are used to meet this requirement. There were about 5,000 full-time students enrolled in district virtual programs in 2011-12, an increase of 25% over 2010-11, including the 2,000 in district franchises. Most districts operate more than one virtual program under the VIP umbrella, and the number of options increased in 2011-12 due to a requirement for many districts to offer at least three options at all grade levels. To accommodate the requirement that all but the small districts offer multiple providers, some districts are entering into agreements with other districts to allow their students to enroll in their VIPs or signing up with regional education agencies.

District Franchises of FLVS are a significant subset of district VIPs. Two regional consortia (the Panhandle Regional Consortium and the North East Florida Regional Consortium), representing 27 districts, and an additional 29 districts independently, operate franchises of FLVS in SY 2012-13. This represents a dramatic increase from eight franchises in 2008-09. The franchises reported over 33,000 half-credit completions in 2011-12, a 16% increase over the previous year. These enrollments include about 2,000 fully online students, while about 10,000 were supplemental course enrollments. These are in addition to the FLVS enrollments reported above. Although districts may use their franchises to meet VIP requirements, the franchises also serve home education, private school, and other public school students.

District Virtual Course Offerings: Districts also may offer online courses for grades K-12 outside of their VIP and district franchises. Students from other school districts may take these courses if not offered by their own school districts.

The first two **virtual charter schools** opened in Osceola School District in SY 2012-13. iVirtual League Academy is serving students in grades 6-11 and is operated by Charter Schools USA. Florida Virtual Academy at Osceola is serving students in grades K-9 and is operated by K12 Inc. In addition, K12 Inc. continues to operate its state-level K-8 virtual school, although it is phasing out and will serve 30 or fewer students in SY 2012-13.

¹⁰⁸ Florida Statutes 1002.20 and 1001.42 regarding school choice; retrieved June 13, 2012, http://www.leg.state.fl.us/statutes/index.cfm?mode=View%20Statutes&SubMenu=1&App_mode=Display_Statute&Search_String=1002.20&URL=1000-1099/1002/Sections/1002.20.html and http://www.leg.state.fl.us/statutes/index.cfm?mode=View%20Statutes&SubMenu=1&App_mode=Display_Statute&Search_String=1001.42&URL=1000-1099/1001/Sections/1001.42.html

¹⁰⁹ Florida Statute 1002.37; retrieved June 13, 2012, http://www.leg.state.fl.us/Statutes/index.cfm?App_mode=Display_Statute&Search_String=&URL=1000-1099/1002/Sections/1002.37.html

Florida's Public Virtual Education Options 2012-13				
Virtual Program / School	Program Type	Grade Levels Served	Student Eligibility	Enrollments 2011-12
State Level				
Florida Virtual School (FLVS)	Part Time	K-12	All students K-1 and 6-12 Grades 2-5 per s. 1002.455	303,329 course enrollments
Florida Virtual School Full Time (FLVS FT)	Full Time	K-12	All students	3,866 students
District Level				
District Franchise of FLVS	Same as FLVS	Same as FLVS	Same as FLVS	2,000 FT students 10,000 course enrollments
District Virtual Instruction Program (VIP): Provider or District Operated	Full Time	K-12	All students Per s. 1002.455	3,000 FT students (not including the 2,000 from the district franchises listed above) 200 students
	Part Time	K-12	All students Per s. 1002.455	
District Virtual Course Offerings	Full Time	K-12	All students per s. 1002.455	0
	Part Time	K-12	All students per s. 1002.455	800
Virtual Charter School	Full Time	K-5 6-12	All students Per s. 1002.455	0 0

All students = Public, private, and home education students¹¹⁰

Eligibility per s. 1002.455 = Students must meet one of the following criteria: Prior-year in Florida public school, siblings of virtual students enrolled in current and end of previous year, military dependents who recently moved to Florida, students in grades K-1, students in grades K-5 enrolling in full-time virtual program.

Limited Part Time = Grades K-12 courses measured by FCAT, End-of-course (EOC) assessments and AP exams; courses offered to students enrolled in dropout prevention, academic intervention and Department of Juvenile Justice programs; core courses to meet class size requirements; or Florida college grades K-12 courses.

**Table 7: Source: Florida's public virtual education options 2012-13,
<http://www.fldoe.org/schools/virtual-schools/pdf/veof.pdf>**

State policies

Legislation passed in 2012 authorizes part-time courses for elementary students through FLVS, clarifies the online learning requirement passed in 2011, and links funding for both online and brick-and-mortar students to end-of-course exams beginning in 2013-14. CS/CS/HB7063 (2012)¹¹¹ includes the following provisions:

- Clarifies the online learning requirement to prohibit a district from requiring a student to take an online course to meet graduation requirements outside of the school day or in addition to a full load of courses. Also provides exemptions for meeting the online course graduation requirement for students who have individual education plans (IEPs) that indicate an online course would not be appropriate and for students who have been enrolled in a Florida high school for one year or less.
- Funding for courses with EOCs will be performance-based for brick-and-mortar schools and virtual schools beginning in their fourth year of implementation (e.g., 2013-14 for Algebra I).

¹¹⁰ Supplemental courses are reported as number of course enrollments, and full-time online students are reported as the number of students.

¹¹¹ CS/CS/HB7063 (2012); retrieved July 30, 2012, <http://www.myfloridahouse.gov/Sections/Bills/billsdetail.aspx?BillId=48958>

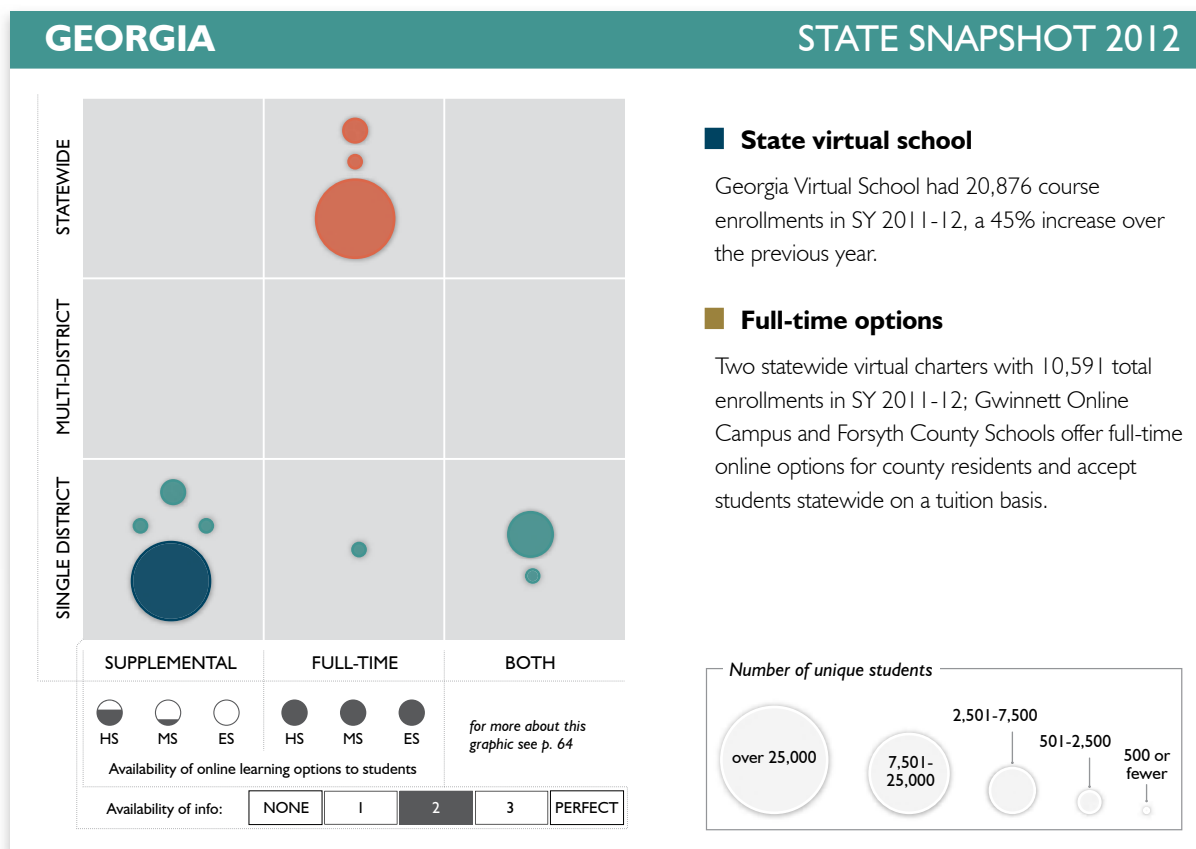
- A full-time FLVS student may be eligible to participate in extracurricular activities at the student's local district public school. The law also specifies that students must abide by district policies including residency, behavior, and performance requirements.
- Requires FLVS students to take statewide assessments at their local district public school.
- Clarifies funding definitions and restrictions for full-time virtual instruction programs. It removes the requirement that elementary students complete an entire basic education program and be promoted to a higher grade level to earn any funding, allowing elementary students to earn partial FTE.
- District funding and enrollment periods are modified.
- Requires providers to include a financial audit as part of the virtual instruction program provider approval process.
- Revises provisions related to virtual instruction through blended learning opportunities provided by districts in a traditional setting.
- Specifies that students in blended learning courses must be full-time students of the school and receive the online instruction in a classroom setting. The funding, performance, and accountability requirements are the same as for traditional courses.
- Requires full-time virtual programs to fulfill exceptional education student requirements.

Florida's online and blended learning landscape is based on earlier legislation; details are available at www.kpk12.com/states/.

Funding

- The District Virtual Instruction Program (VIP) and virtual charter schools are funded through the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP) based on successful completions. Districts receive FEFP funding for each student and may negotiate with virtual instruction providers for rates below the per-pupil funding. Completions are defined by 1011.61¹¹² as:
 - Grades 6-8: course completion with passing grade
 - Grades 9-12: credits earned
- Per-student funding for FLVS for 2012-13 was increased to \$433 per course completion. FLVS will receive about \$181.9 million in funding in 2012-13. FLVS funding was also modified with the 2012 legislation. FLVS FT is now eligible for more than basic education funding (including ESE and ESOL).
- In most cases, virtual education students will be funded at \$5,200 regardless of whether the student is receiving additional services.

¹¹² Florida Statute 1011.61; retrieved June 13, 2012, http://www.leg.state.fl.us/Statutes/index.cfm?App_mode=Display_Statute&Search_String=&URL=1000-1099/1011/Sections/1011.61.html



Georgia has online learning activity through the state virtual school, Georgia Virtual School, (GAVS); several large district programs; and several statewide virtual charter schools.¹¹³

In 2012, the Georgia legislature passed three bills that significantly impacted online learning policy. SB289¹¹⁴ affects all school districts in Georgia and includes the following provisions:

- All students in grades 9-12 may enroll in online courses through GAVS without the approval of the student's home district, "regardless of whether the school in which the student is enrolled offers the same course." The district pays the State Department of Education (SDE) for the cost of the GAVS course, but the total cost cannot exceed \$250 per student per semester. SB289 also removes the one-course-per-semester limit on the number of GAVS courses a student may take.
- Beginning with SY 2012-13, all districts must provide both part-and full-time online learning options to all students in grades 3-12. Districts must provide written information on online learning options to parents of all students. To meet this requirement, districts may use private online education providers, online courses offered by other districts or consortia, multidistrict contractual arrangements executed by a regional educational service agency, state colleges, or GAVS.
- All providers must be approved by the SDE, which will publish a list of approved providers each year. The process and responsibility for provider approval was still being defined as of September 2012. GAVS will submit courses for approval even though SB289 exempts it from the approval process.
- To become approved, providers must 1) demonstrate prior success offering online courses in grades K-12 through "quantified student performance improvements for each subject

¹¹³ State charter schools; retrieved June 11, 2012, <http://archives.doe.k12.ga.us/DMGetDocument.aspx/Master%20Charter%20School%20Database%202012-02-02.pdf?p=6CC6799F8C1371F6BCD13A7711B923A00118CC29B27A42B17D31E7E235DE8A64&Type=D>

¹¹⁴ SB289 (2012); retrieved May 24, 2012, http://www1.legis.ga.gov/legis/2011_12/versions/sb289_SB_289_APP_9.htm

area and grade level,” 2) assure program quality through a detailed curriculum and student performance accountability plan, and 3) publish a public report based on a set of information to be adopted by the SBE. Additional approval criteria may be established by the SDE. Providers retain approved status for a period of five years. SB289 also establishes a minimum set of contract requirements between a district and a provider.

- Local school boards cannot enact policies to keep students from online learning classes during the school day.
- The SDE must submit a report to the governor and legislature by December 1, 2012, that identifies the best methods for the SDE to aid districts in acquiring digital learning at reasonable prices, increase student access to digital learning, and identify decision-making criteria to help districts assess various aspects of digital learning.
- Publishers of textbooks recommended by the SBE “shall provide an electronic format version of such textbook, which may include a digital version.”

Virtual charters have a tumultuous history in Georgia, particularly regarding authorization and funding. In May 2011, the Supreme Court of Georgia found HB881¹¹⁵ to be unconstitutional, finding that only school districts had the right to authorize charter schools based on the state constitution. The finding dissolved the authority of the Georgia Charter Schools Commission to grant charters and establish funding levels for statewide virtual charter schools, thus voiding the existing commission charters for new virtual schools and some other schools. The SBE took action to restore charters to those schools that had been stripped of them by the Supreme Court decision, allowing virtual charter schools to operate for SY 2011-12. Details of the history of virtual charter school legislation can be found at www.kpk12.com/states/.

HB797¹¹⁶ (2012) is enabling legislation for a constitutional amendment, the Georgia Charter Schools Amendment, to be voted on by Georgia citizens in November 2012. If the amendment is not passed, portions of HB797 related to the establishment and operation of a new state charter commission will not take effect. The law establishes a new State Charter Schools Commission operating under the SBE and defines its duties and powers, which include developing and disseminating best practices and accountability standards for state charter schools, publishing an annual review and evaluation of state charter school academic and financial performance, and making public information on state charter schools available to parents. HB797 also establishes a new funding formula¹¹⁷ for state charter schools based on state per-pupil funding for school districts. Virtual charters will receive the same per-pupil funding as brick-and-mortar schools per the Quality Basic Education funding formula, plus supplemental funding for all charter schools established in HB797. Virtual charter funding for 2012-13 is projected to be about \$4,460 per enrollment.¹¹⁸ HB797 also repeals all conflicting laws related to state charter schools.

HB175 (2012), the Online Clearinghouse Act, directs the SDE to create an online clearinghouse through which local school systems and charter schools may offer online courses to students in other schools and districts.¹¹⁹ HB175 directs the clearinghouse to:

- Establish procedures and requirements for offering a course through the clearinghouse.
- Provide a mechanism for enrollment in clearinghouse online courses, the payment of course fees, the assignment of grades, and for offering dual enrollment courses.

¹¹⁵ HB881 (2008) created the “Georgia Charter Schools Commission as an independent, state-level charter school authorizing entity ... empowered to approve commission charter schools.” It authorized the Commission to set charter funding levels. HB881; retrieved May 29, 2012, http://www.legis.state.ga.us/legis/2007_08/pdf/hb881.pdf.

¹¹⁶ HB797; retrieved June 11, 2012, http://www1.legis.ga.gov/legis/2011_12/versions/hb797_HB_797_APP_16.htm

¹¹⁷ The funding portion of HB 797 went into effect July 1, 2012, and is not contingent on passage of the constitutional amendment.

¹¹⁸ Total per pupil funding of \$4,460 includes \$2,744.80 in QBE funding and \$1,715.57 supplemental funding based on the state calculation for all Georgia charter schools established by HB797.

¹¹⁹ HB175 (2012); retrieved August 28, 2012, http://www1.legis.ga.gov/legis/2011_12/sum/hb175.htm

- Include courses in the clearinghouse by a “local school system or charter school.”
- Insure courses meet state standards, are taught by a highly qualified teacher, and meet technical specifications prescribed by the SDE.
- Provide for rules and regulations.
- Provide for statutory construction.

The SDE must approve courses for inclusion in the clearinghouse, although criteria for approval had not been established as of September 2012. A timetable for implementation of the clearinghouse is uncertain because HB175 did not establish funding for the clearinghouse.

Online programs

Online programs include the Georgia Virtual School (GAVS), the Georgia Cyber Academy (GCA), and Georgia Connections Academy (GACA), as well as several suburban Atlanta districts that operate online programs. GCA served 9,993 enrollments in grades K-8 in SY 2011-12 and GACA served 598 students in grades K-8 in SY 2011-12; GACA is authorized to serve K-12 in SY 2012-13. The Provost Academy Georgia is a new virtual charter serving grades 9-12 in SY 2012-13. Gwinnett County Online Campus (GOC) was granted charter authorization in 2011, allowing it to offer full-time options for Gwinnett County students in addition to supplemental courses. The full-time school enrollment for 2011-12 was 107. GOC supplemental course enrollments totaled about 5,000 in 2011-12, with nearly half generated by summer school enrollments. Forsyth County Schools’ iAchieve Virtual Academy also offers a full-time online program for county residents; it accepts out-of-district students on a tuition basis. iAchieve had 121 full-time enrollments in SY 2011-12. Cobb Virtual Academy, a program of Cobb County Public Schools, had 1,903 supplemental course enrollments with 1,023 unique students in SY 2011-12.

GAVS was created by legislation in 2005, and in 2006 the SBE created the rule that governs the school.¹²⁰ GAVS had 20,876 course enrollments¹²¹ in SY 2011-12, a 45% increase over the previous year. GAVS expanded to serve grades 6-12 beginning with SY 2012-13 and will serve grades 3-12 in 2013-14. GAVS offers summer school courses on a tuition basis only, with no cap on summer enrollment. GAVS is unusual for a state virtual school in that its supplemental students take state end-of-course exams,¹²² allowing for a comparison of test scores between students in online courses and state averages. In SY 2011-12, students taking end-of-course exams through GAVS scored higher than the state average on each of the eight end-of-course tests administered.¹²³

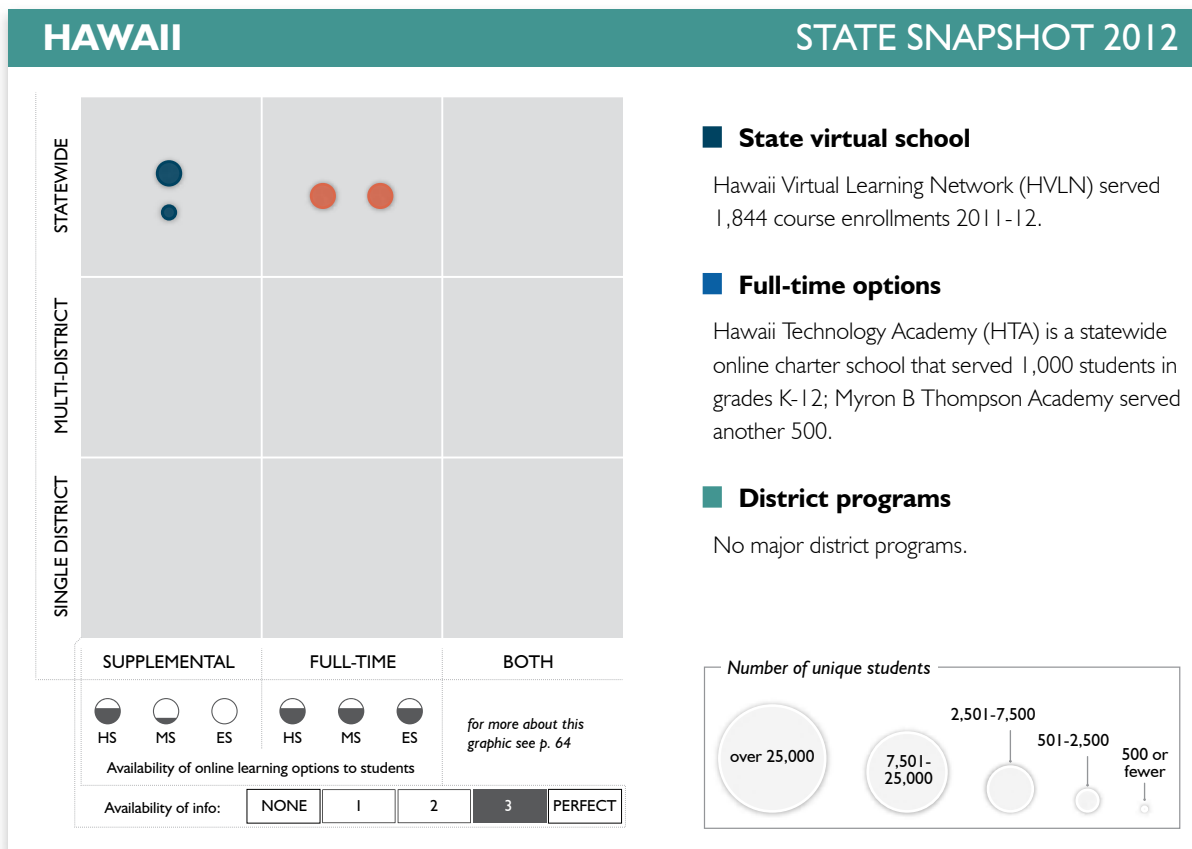
GAVS funding changes significantly with SB289 (2012). In the past, GAVS received an annual state appropriation based on the per-pupil funding a district would have received for a course. When a student took a course, funds equivalent to the district’s full-time equivalent portion for each course segment were diverted from the home district to the SDE and held for payment to GAVS. With SB289, districts receive all of the per-pupil funding and now pay GAVS (through the SDE) \$250 per student per online course. GAVS will receive annual line-item funding for operations plus the per-course funding from districts. Annual line-item funding will remain about \$5 million (GAVS 2011-12 budget was about \$5.4 million), but will become a smaller percentage of GAVS overall funding over time as per-course, per-student funding from districts increases. The new funding model went into effect in July 2012, but the percentage of budget reduction will not be quantified for 12-18 months. Per SB289, there is now no limit on the number of GAVS courses a student may take. A limited number of state funded seats will be offered to homeschooled and private school students as part of the annual line item funding.

¹²⁰ 160-8-1-.01 Georgia Virtual School; retrieved June 12, 2012, <http://www.doe.k12.ga.us/External-Affairs-and-Policy/State-Board-of-Education/SBOE%20Rules/160-8-1-.01.pdf>

¹²¹ Course enrollment numbers retrieved from GAVS, a new source in *Keeping Pace 2012*, which may explain the decrease from 2009-10 reported numbers.

¹²² Georgia Virtual School, end-of-course exams, retrieved July 15, 2012, <http://www.gavirtualschool.org/CourseInfo/EndofCourseTestInformation.aspx>

¹²³ Unpublished data provided by Georgia Virtual School



Hawaii has several statewide online programs, including the Hawaii Virtual Learning Network's partners the E-School and Myron B. Thompson Academy, the private Kamehameha Schools and Elite Element Academy, and the Hawaii Technology Academy charter school.¹²⁴ In recent years the state has engaged in active discussions about online learning. In 2007 the state Legislature created the Hawaii Online Task Force, which reported to the 2008 legislature.¹²⁵ In 2008 the legislature passed HB2971 SD2, which implemented the task force recommendations. The bill directed the Department of Education (DOE) to expand online learning opportunities for students across the state by building on online programs. It also proclaimed that "online learning is a strategic vehicle that will define the DOE as a 21st Century learning institution."¹²⁶ To that end, the Hawaii Online Task Force created the Hawaii Virtual Learning Network (HVLN). The most important part of the legislation directed the charter partners, including the DOE's E-School, Myron B. Thompson Academy, and the University of Hawaii Online Learning Academy (a tutoring program), to expand and systematize online course offerings. To accomplish this, HVLN has:

- Established criteria, evaluated and approved online courses, and offered training to teachers in online instruction.
- Provided centralized support services to online students.
- Established partnerships with institutes of higher education, private schools, charter schools, state virtual schools, and commercial vendors.¹²⁷

¹²⁴ Hawaii has only a single, statewide school district; therefore the multi-district designation for online schools in other states does not apply.

¹²⁵ Online Learning Task Force Report to Hawaii State Legislature; retrieved June 6, 2012, http://doe.k12.hi.us/reports/tolegislature_2008/A20-EduOnlineLearningTaskForce.pdf

¹²⁶ HB2971; retrieved June 6, 2012, http://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/session2008/bills/HB2971_sd2.htm

¹²⁷ Hawaii Virtual Learning Network; retrieved June 6, 2012, <http://hvl.n.k12.hi.us/>

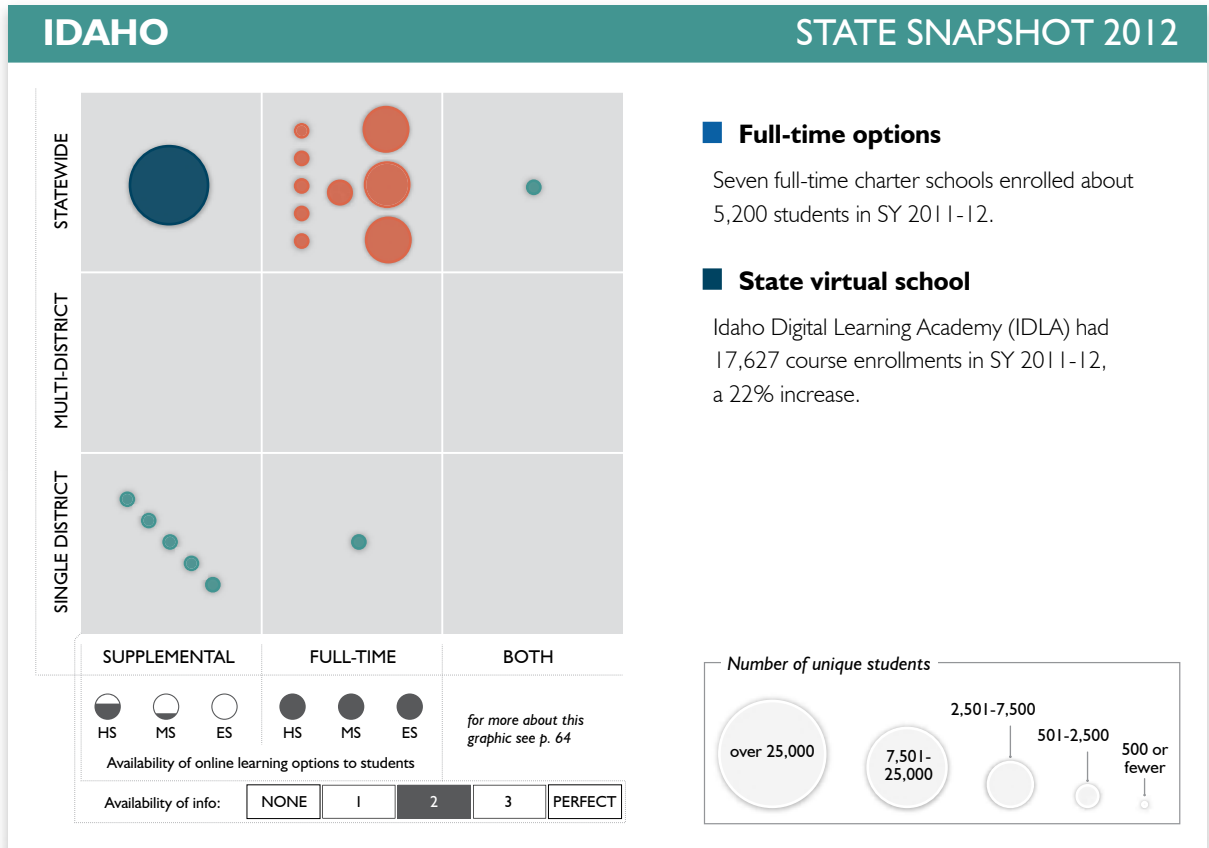
The DOE's E-School/HVLN is a supplemental online program offering courses to grades 7-12; it had 1,844 enrollments in 2011-12, a 24% increase from 2010-11. The E-School receives \$500,000 from federal funds. Public school secondary students statewide can take an online course from the E-School program during the school year on a first-come, first-served basis at no charge. Private school students are allowed to take courses during the summer sessions; all students pay for courses offered during the summer session. Member schools pay a membership fee and receive benefits such as online professional development and access to online course content.

Thompson Academy Extension program has partnered with HVLN. It reported 800 enrollments in SY 2011-12 that are included in the state virtual school enrollment numbers. Myron B. Thompson Academy is a full-time charter school that serves about 500 students statewide. It is mostly online, though it has some face-to-face requirements.

Hawaii Technology Academy (HTA) is a statewide blended learning charter school for students in grades K-12. HTA is entering its fifth year with enrollment of 1,250 students, a 25% increase from the previous year. HTA offers a blended learning program to students on Oahu, Kauai, Maui, and the Big Island of Hawaii. Learning takes place both online and face-to-face at Learning Centers on Oahu and Kauai or at community locations on Hawaii and Maui. The Elite Element Academy is a private K-12 virtual hybrid school, partnering with the Halau Ku Mana public charter school in Honolulu. Kamehameha Schools Distance Learning is a private K-12 school offering nationwide distance learning courses for high school students. In SY 2011-12, Kamehameha Schools enrolled 274 students in blended learning courses with a focus on Hawaiian culture through its 'Ike Hawaii Distance Learning Program.¹²⁸

State policies did not change significantly in 2012 and are available at www.kpk12.com/states/.

¹²⁸ Kamehameha Schools Distance Learning; retrieved June 6, 2012, <http://ksdl.ksbe.edu/ikehawaii>



Idaho has a state virtual school (the Idaho Digital Learning Academy or IDLA), seven full-time virtual charters,¹²⁹ district programs, and a state distance education academy.¹³⁰ IDLA had 17,627 course enrollments in SY 2011-12, a 22% increase. The virtual charters¹³¹ enrolled about 5,200 students in 2011-12,¹³² an increase of 10% over the previous year.¹³³ There are a few district programs, including the Bonneville District Virtual Academy, which serves grades K-9 using K12 Inc. curricula. The Vallivue, Emmett, and Coeur d'Alene school districts also offer online programs, largely using private provider content and technology support.

SB1184 (2011), commonly known as Students Come First, made sweeping changes in online learning policy affecting key issues around supplemental online course providers.¹³⁴ After passage, opponents gathered enough signatures to place a referendum on the November 2012 state ballot to repeal SB1184. Emergency clauses in subsequent 2011 legislation allowed SB1184 to take effect, but if repealed by voters in 2012, all aspects of the law will be overturned. The law accomplished the following:

- Expanded student choice by allowing students to enroll in online courses without district approval beginning in SY 2012-13, though with limitations detailed below. Implementation won't occur until SY 2013-14, despite the provisions of the law. Students may choose an

¹²⁹ Idaho Public Charter Schools, see "Other" tab; retrieved May 31, 2012, http://www.sde.idaho.gov/site/charter_schools/regions.htm

¹³⁰ Idaho Distance Education Academy is similar to a virtual charter but is classified as a distance education academy; enrolled 787 students in 2011-12.

¹³¹ Details about the seven virtual charter schools can be found on the *Keeping Pace* website at <http://kpk12.com/states/>.

¹³² Idaho SDE enrollment statistics by district; retrieved May 31, 2012, http://www.sde.idaho.gov/site/statistics/fall_enrollment.htm

¹³³ *Keeping Pace 2011* reported 2010-11 virtual charter enrollments to be 5,223; this number was subsequently revised down to 4,728

¹³⁴ SB1184; retrieved May 31, 2012, <http://www.legislature.idaho.gov/legislation/2011/S1184Bookmark.htm>; all quotes in the following section are from the legislation

online course from an out-of-district provider even if the online course is available through the student's local district. Except for the "8 in 6" program (explained below), students may not take an online course to exceed 1.0 FTE.

- Assigned two-thirds of a student's ADA funding for a single online course to the course provider, except when a "school district or public charter school has a contract in place for the provision of online courses." Districts must pay providers the statewide contracted price as defined in a master service agreement between the State Department of Education (SDE) and the provider.
- Increased the percentage of instructional staff allowance that can be used to pay for virtual instruction from 5% to 15%.
- Created an online course requirement for students beginning with the graduating class of 2016, the details of which were determined by the State Board of Education (SBE).¹³⁵ SB1237 (2012) amends that online learning graduation requirement.
- Provided funding for mobile computing devices for high school teachers in 2012-13 and for high school students in 2013-14. The SDE released an RFP for selection of a provider in 2012; as of August 2012 the provider had not been selected. The first 30 districts and two charter schools to receive laptop devices were selected in June 2012.¹³⁶ The one-to-one device provision of SB1184 is budgeted for about \$2.5 million in FY 2013 and \$10.1 million in FY 2014.¹³⁷
- Created the Technology Task Force to develop a plan for one-to-one mobile computing devices and online courses, and to formulate recommendations on a range of online learning policies and procedures.¹³⁸
- Provided funding for "professional development and training that promotes the effective use of technology" to "train high school staff in the use of mobile computing devices by students in the classroom, and the integration of such use into the curriculum." Funding for FY 2013 is budgeted at \$3.9 million.
- Funded the development of "high quality digital learning resources and software linked to state and local curricula, including model lesson plans, content and formative and summative assessment tied to rigorous college and career-ready standards and safe and secure online knowledge sharing and collaboration systems." This provision includes Schoolnet, the statewide instructional management system, that is funded by a three-year, \$21 million grant from the J.A. and Kathryn Albertson Foundation, after which state funding will maintain the program.
- Required the SBE to establish a method to approve online providers.

Additional details on the provisions of SB1184 can be found at www.kpk12.com/states/.

The student choice provision of SB1184 will not be implemented in SY 2012-13 due to the timing of online provider approvals. The application window defined by the SDE for providers closes November 1, 2012, with reviews of the provider courses to be completed by March 1, 2013. All provider courses must be approved by the SDE; once approved, quality assurance is monitored in two ways:¹³⁹ 1) end-user reviews based on evaluations by students and parents after course completion, regardless of how the student performed in the course; and 2) Visitor Privilege

¹³⁵ SB1184 originally required four online courses for graduation, but the final definition for the online learning requirement was reduced to two courses. Where online learning requirements in Michigan and Alabama focused on promoting the 21st century skills that usually accompany online instruction, the Idaho legislation was perceived more as a cost-cutting measure and has met with significant resistance from stakeholders.

¹³⁶ SDE memorandum, retrieved July 19, 2012, http://www.studentscomefirst.org/docs/Statewide_Department%20Announces%20Districts%20Selected%20to%20Participate%20in%20First%20Deployment%20of%20Laptop%20Devices_FINAL,%20June%205,%202012.pdf

¹³⁷ Technology Task Force, FY 2012-2015 Technology Budget Presentation, retrieved July 18, 2012, <http://www.studentscomefirst.org/docs/FY2012-2015%20Technology%20Budget%20Presentation.pdf>

¹³⁸ Technology Task Force; retrieved May 31, 2012, <http://www.studentscomefirst.org/technologytaskforce.htm>

¹³⁹ Idaho State Department of Education, retrieved July 18, 2012, <http://www.sde.idaho.gov/site/digitalLearning/courseReviewAndAcademicForensicAudit.htm>

Evaluations (VPE) completed by independent evaluators who have access to current, active online courses. An “Academic Forensic Audit” may be conducted by the SDE if end-user or VPE reviews determine that a course does not meet SDE standards, a formal complaint is deemed justified by the SDE, or if “55% of students or less achieve typical or high Student Adequate growth as measured by the ISAT [Idaho Standards Achievement] test in assessed subjects.” Providers will be charged \$1,000 for each course audit.

Districts are responding to the student choice provision of SB1184 in a variety of ways including 1) creating their own programs; 2) developing multi-district consortiums to offer synchronous courses or asynchronous courses; or 3) contracting directly with providers.

SB1237 (2012) amends the online learning graduation requirement established by SB1184 to allow more flexibility by: 1) eliminating language that requires the student and teacher to be in two different locations; and 2) removing the requirement for a fully asynchronous course, allowing a district to meet the requirements as long as at least 51% of the curriculum is delivered through technology. SB1237 amends the definition of an online course to broaden the definition to include synchronous or blended learning. The law also clarifies aspects of the fractional funding formula¹⁴⁰ implemented as part of SB1184.

IDLA has a budget of about \$5 million for SY 2012-13, the last year of funding exclusively from state appropriation; that is about \$1 million less than it received for FY 2011-12, following a 22% reduction in the IDLA budget from FY 2010-11. Per SB1184,¹⁴¹ beginning with FY 2013-14, IDLA funding will be based solely on the fractional ADA formula that applies to all online courses and providers.

HB426 (2012),¹⁴² referred to as the “8 in 6 program,” establishes state funding to pay for up to eight overload and/or summer courses for college-bound students in grades 7-12. The law motivates students to “graduate from high school with one or two years of college credit or with a professional-technical degree or certification” by allowing them to earn credits that would normally take eight years (two of junior high, four of high school, and two years of college) in just six years. HB426 stipulates that preference will be given to students who have previously successfully completed at least one online course.

Idaho SDE rule¹⁴³ establishes a pilot project allowing students to earn credit by demonstrating mastery of a subject instead of only being allowed to earn credit through seat time; it was put into code in 2012.¹⁴⁴ Standards to achieve credits by demonstrating mastery of a subject are to be defined and approved by the local school district or local education agency.¹⁴⁵

IDLA is working with districts in Idaho to implement local blended learning programs. All Twin Falls School District middle school students are participating in online or blended learning classes in SY 2011-12.

Additional details on funding, governance, tracking, and accountability can be found at www.kpk12.com/states/.

¹⁴⁰ Fractional daily attendance as defined in SB1184 is 2/3 of the portion of ADA attributable to the online course. SB1237 clarifies, “the [SDE] shall identify the fraction attributable to such attendance for each student and furnish the home school district ... with a dollar amount of funding attributable to each such fraction” Fractional ADA does not apply if the district offers the online course, or if the online course exceeds the maximum number of periods of instruction offered at the school in which the student is enrolled.

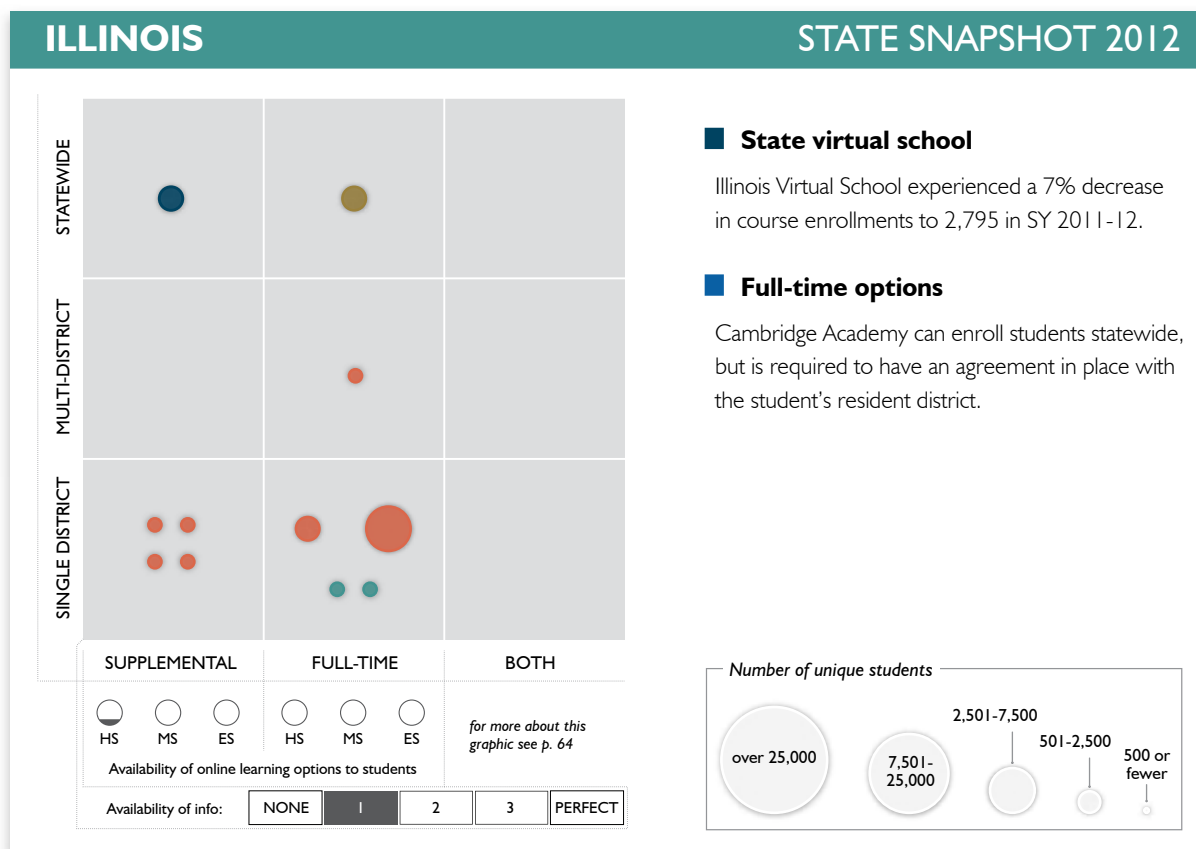
¹⁴¹ Idaho SB1184; retrieved May 31, 2012, <http://www.legislature.idaho.gov/legislation/2011/S1184Bookmark.htm>

¹⁴² HB426; retrieved June 12, 2012, <http://legislature.idaho.gov/legislation/2012/H0426.pdf>

¹⁴³ Idaho statutes; retrieved June 12, 2012, <http://www.legislature.idaho.gov/idstat/Title33/T33CH16SECT33-1620.htm>

¹⁴⁴ IDAPA 08.02.03.105 Rules Governing Thoroughness; retrieved June 12, 2012, http://www.sde.idaho.gov/site/publications/weekly_newsletter_docs/2010/January%2020%20newsletter.pdf

¹⁴⁵ Ibid



Illinois has a state virtual school (Illinois Virtual School or IVS), and several district-level online and blended schools including three in Chicago.

In 2009, Illinois enacted its first online learning law, HB2448 (Public Act 96-0684), which allowed school districts to establish “remote educational programs” and count these enrollments toward the general state aid formula.¹⁴⁶ The law required that the program be delivered in a classroom or other traditional school setting, and on days the district was in attendance during the regular school year. In 2011, HB3223 (Public Act 97-0339)¹⁴⁷ amended the law by allowing districts to receive state funding for students in a remote education program delivered “in the home or other location outside of a school building” and on any day of the year, including those outside the standard school calendar. A district must submit the school board policy and remote education plan to the Illinois State Board of Education. A limited number of school districts have created a remote educational program, and information on them is not readily available.

Online programs

Virtual Opportunities Inside a School Environment (VOISE) Academy in Chicago uses a blended learning approach in which students attend the physical school, but online courses act as the primary delivery method for course content.¹⁴⁸ VOISE Academy is a Chicago Public Schools (CPS) performance school created under the CPS Renaissance 2010 initiative. Indian Prairie School District offers online courses and reported just over 300 course enrollments in SY 2011-12.

¹⁴⁶ HB2448; retrieved June 12, 2012, <http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/billstatus.asp?DocNum=2448&GAID=10&GA=96&DocTypeID=HB&LegID=44612&SessionID=76>

¹⁴⁷ HB3223; retrieved June 12, 2012, <http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/97/HB/PDF/09700HB3223lv.pdf>

¹⁴⁸ Innosight Institute, retrieved July 17, 2012, <http://www.innosightinstitute.org/media-room/publications/education-publications/voise-academy/>

K12 Inc. provides curriculum and services for three charter schools in Illinois, although none operate statewide. The Chicago Virtual Charter School (CVCS) requires students to meet at a physical location once a week to address a legal provision that charter schools not be home-based.¹⁴⁹ CVCS enrolled 590 students in SY 2011-12. Youth Connection Charter School Virtual High School is a Chicago public school serving only students ages 18-21 (grades 9–12) who have dropped out of high school. It offers a blended learning format with students spending some time at learning centers around Chicago.

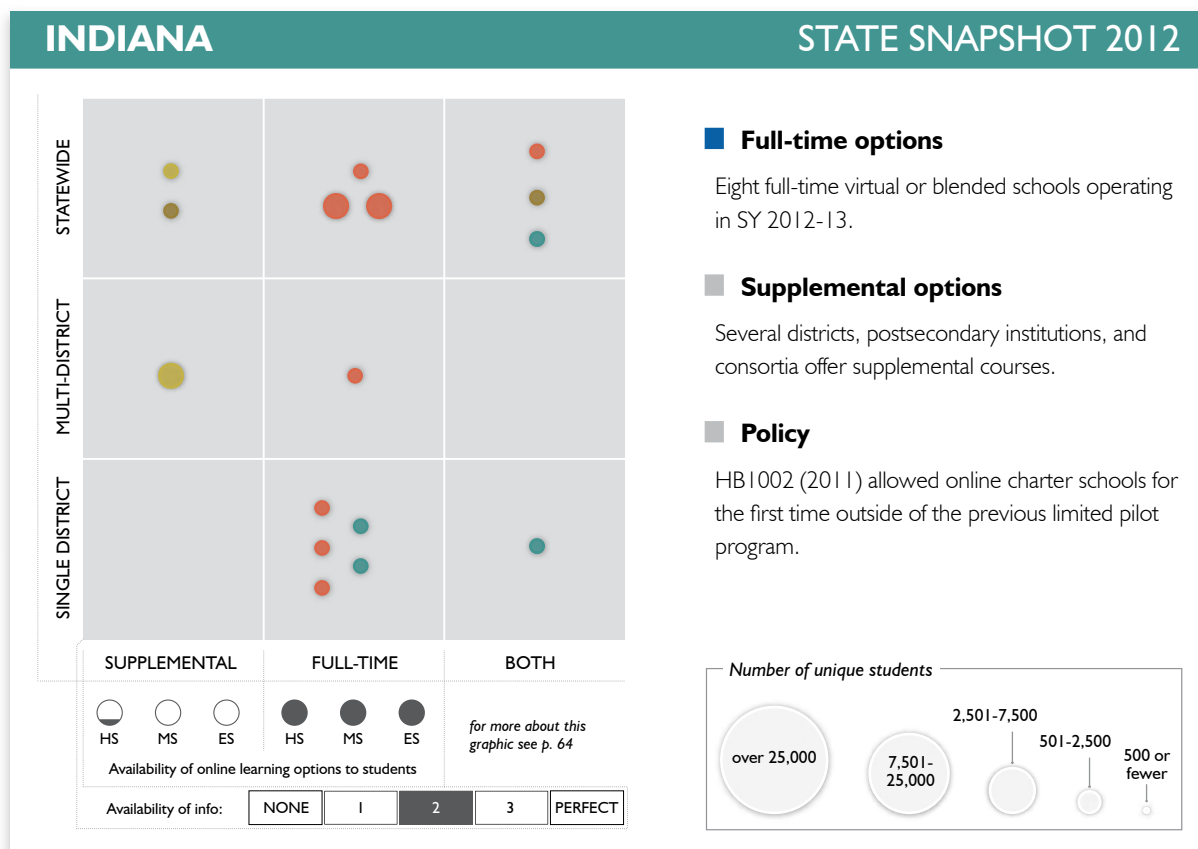
Cambridge Academy at Cambridge Lakes Charter School is a full-time virtual school that received approval from the state in June 2011 to serve K-12 students statewide. To serve students from outside the district, it must have written agreements in place with each student's district of residence.

IVS experienced a 7% decrease in course enrollments to 2,795 for SY 2011-12.¹⁵⁰ IVS is the online provider for original credit online courses for Chicago Public Schools. It is funded via state appropriation (\$1.2 million in 2012-13), and course enrollment fees of \$250 per student per semester. IVS provides teacher professional development online to 450 Illinois teachers through both self-paced asynchronous and instructor-led courses.

State policies did not change significantly in 2011 or 2012 and are available at www.kpk12.com/states/.

¹⁴⁹ See www.kpk12.com/states/ for a history of the lawsuit by Chicago Teachers Union claiming that CVCS was not a legal charter school because Illinois law indicates that charter schools may not be home-based.

¹⁵⁰ In 2010-2011, IVS had 288 enrollments from one district in which IVS was the Spanish I-4 program for the district. In 2011-12 the district hired a Spanish teacher and no longer uses IVS.



Indiana has expanded online and blended options for its students in recent years with a new virtual public school, charter schools, blended schools, and supplemental options. This is a result of sweeping education reform laws passed in 2011, including legislation that directly affected virtual charter schools. HB1002 (2011)¹⁵¹ accomplished the following:

- Ended the virtual charter school pilot program in existence since 2009, opening the door for virtual charters to seek sponsors and districts to start their own public programs.
- As of December 31, 2011, it provided that a virtual charter school's funding is equal to the sum of: 1) the virtual charter school's average daily membership (ADM) multiplied by 87.5% (up from 80%) of the school's foundation amount plus 2) the total of any special education grants to which the virtual charter school is entitled.
- It provided that each school year, at least 60% (down from 75%) of students enrolled in virtual charter schools for the first time must have been included in the state's ADM count for the previous school year.
- After December 31, 2011, a virtual charter school is entitled to receive special education grants under IC 20-43-7. These are calculated in the same manner as special education grants are calculated for other school corporations.

¹⁵¹ HB1002 (2011); retrieved June 14, 2012, <http://www.in.gov/apps/lisa/session/billwatch/billinfo?year=2011&session=1&request=getBill&docno=1002>

Online programs

Virtual schools have expanded quickly in the wake of 2011 legislation that ended the pilot program.

- Hoosier Academies was an outgrowth of the pilot program and currently operates three schools with a combined enrollment of 2,154 in SY 2011-12: two blended and one fully online. The Indianapolis (grades K-12) and Muncie (grades K-8) campuses are blended schools; the Hoosier Academy Virtual School is fully online and serves grades K-11.
- Achieve Virtual Education Academy opened in Wayne Township in Indianapolis for SY 2011-12 and is the state's first non-charter virtual public school. It served 217 full-time students in SY 2011-12, and about 100 course enrollments for part-time students. Most students come from outside of Wayne Township and must pay \$250 per semester course.
- Indiana Virtual School served 20 full-time students in SY 2011-12, its first year of operation.
- Indiana Connections Academy opened in SY 2010-11 as a fully online school pilot in partnership with Rural Community Academy, serving grades 1-8. In 2011-12, it was authorized by Ball State University to operate as a K-12 virtual charter and served 1,800 students, an increase of 577%.
- Two schools opened in fall 2012: Indiana Cyber Charter, a full-time virtual school serving grades K-12 statewide; and Carpe Diem Collegiate High School, the first Carpe Diem blended school to open outside of Arizona.

In addition to the virtual schools, there are several online programs in Indiana that offer supplemental courses. The Indiana Virtual Academy is an initiative of the Ripley County Community Foundation that provides virtual learning opportunities for the four Ripley County school corporations and the County Career Center. It serves middle and high school students across the state, and reported 2,906 supplemental enrollments in 2011-12, a 37% increase over 2010-11.¹⁵² Indiana Virtual Academy is a member of the Indiana Virtual Learning Consortium, which includes the Indiana Online Academy, the Indiana University High School, Ivy Tech Community College, and the Indiana Academy for Science, Mathematics, and Humanities (a program of Ball State University). The Indiana Online Academy is a supplemental program of the Central Indiana Educational Service Center in Indianapolis. The Indiana Academy for Science, Mathematics and Humanities is an accredited residential high school with an online outreach program offering online courses in Advanced Placement and various topics.¹⁵³ Indiana University High School is a diploma-granting program providing supplemental courses and a full-time online program to students around the world; about 60% of enrollments are Indiana students. Students are charged \$200–\$225 per course.

Crown Point and Tri-Creek School Corporations launched significant initiatives in SY 2012. Tri-Creek rolled out tablets for elementary students, and laptops for teachers, middle, and high school students. Crown Point enrolled 160 freshmen in blended learning courses.

State policies

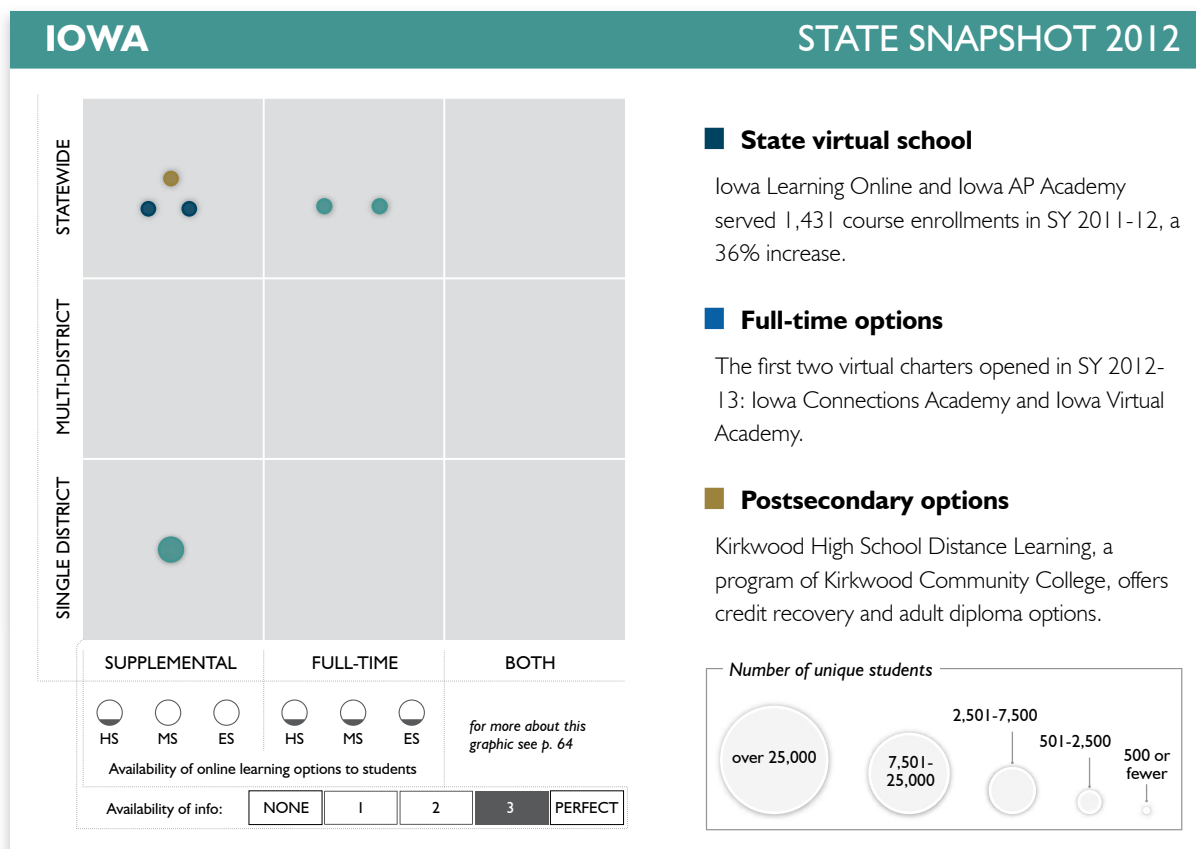
IC 20-24-7-13 is the education code for virtual charter schools.¹⁵⁴ HB1001 (2005) clarified the ability of charter schools to provide online courses. It did not authorize funding for full-time virtual charter schools.¹⁵⁵ Legislation in 2009 established the virtual charter pilot program, which was then considered complete with the passage of HB1002 in 2011. Further details about previous legislation and two 2009 reports on the state of virtual learning in Indiana can be found at <http://www.kpk12.com/states/>.

¹⁵² Enrollments reported through personal communication with INDVA; August 13, 2012.

¹⁵³ Indiana Academy for Science, Mathematics, and Humanities; retrieved June 14, 2012, <http://www.bsu.edu/academy/distance/>

¹⁵⁴ IC 20-24-7-13; retrieved June 14, 2012, <http://www.in.gov/legislative/ic/code/title20/ar24/ch7.html>

¹⁵⁵ HB1001 (2005); retrieved June 14, 2012, http://www.in.gov/apps/lisa/session/billwatch/billinfo?year=2005&session=1&request=getBill&do_cno=1001



Iowa has two partnering supplemental statewide online programs, relatively little district-level online learning activity, one community college offering high school credit recovery, and two new full-time schools as of fall 2012: Iowa Connections Academy and Iowa Virtual Academy. The Iowa Connections Academy serves grades K-12, while Iowa Virtual Academy serves grades K-6, creating the first statewide fully online options for students in Iowa. House File 645 (2011)¹⁵⁶ and Senate File 2284 (2012)¹⁵⁷ have several provisions that impact online learning including:

- Iowa Learning Online (ILO), the Department of Education’s virtual school initiative, is codified. It is the only online program allowed to help districts fulfill its Iowa Code Chapter 272 “offer and teach” requirements. It did not receive additional funding. Districts are prevented from contracting with private providers for “offer and teach” courses.
- It establishes ILO as the Online Learning Program Model. This is repealed as of July 1, 2015, making it equivalent to a three-year pilot.
- Defines online learning and online coursework.
- States that the Department of Education will visit the two district virtual academies, conduct surveys, and provide the legislature with data and a report determining if instruction is delivered primarily by an appropriately Iowa-licensed teacher or by a parent or guardian. The report will “include but is not limited to student achievement and demographic characteristics, retention rates, and the percentage of enrolled students’ active participation in extracurricular activities.”

¹⁵⁶ House File 645 (2011), Section 18; retrieved August 28, 2012, <http://coolice.legis.iowa.gov/Cool-ICE/default.asp?Category=BillInfo&Service=Billbook&menu=text&ga=84&hbill=HF645>

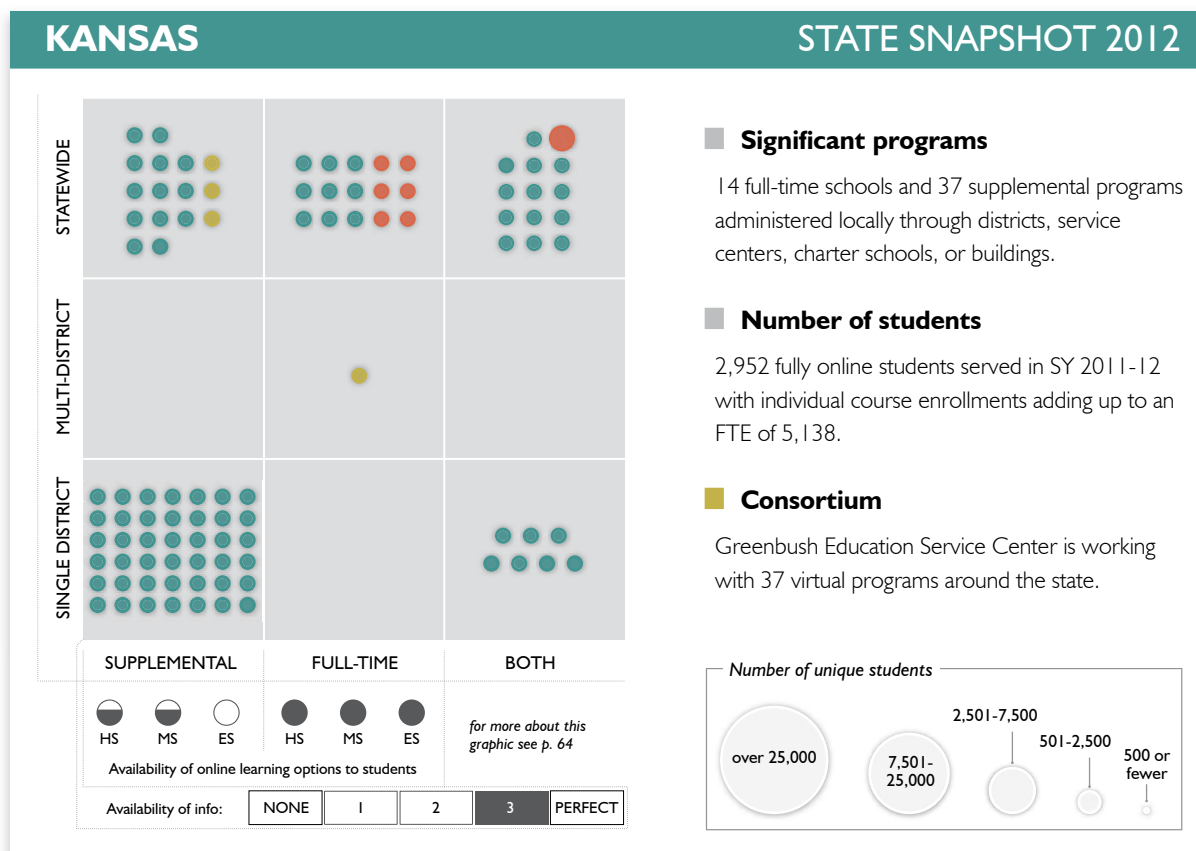
¹⁵⁷ Senate File 2284 Division IV (2012); retrieved August 28, 2012, <http://coolice.legis.iowa.gov/Cool-ICE/default.asp?Category=BillInfo&Service=Billbook&menu=text&ga=84&hbill=SF2284>

- Limits the statewide enrollment of pupils in educational instruction to not more than eighteen one-hundredths of one percent of the statewide enrollments (about 900) and limits the number of students participating in instruction and course content delivered over the Internet to no more than 1% of a sending district's enrollment.
- "Coursework offered under the ILO initiative shall be taught by a teacher licensed under chapter 272 who has completed an online-learning-for-Iowa-educators-professional-development project."

ILO, run by the Iowa Department of Education (IDOE), offers a variety of Internet, face-to-face, video-based, and blended courses. ILO started in summer 2004, offers courses in grades 9-12 (students in grades 8-12), and reported 870 course enrollments for 2011-12, a 52% increase. ILO offers 12 courses with set start/end dates, both synchronous and asynchronous. Some of the program's courses in science and math are offered via the statewide video-based Iowa Communication Network. Additional courses are offered by participating Iowa school districts, with ILO providing support for promotion, registration, and any associated Iowa Communications Network fees. ILO had its first full-time director in 2008, with a mandate from the IDOE to integrate the activities of ILO into the daily activities of the IDOE.

The Iowa Online AP Academy (IOAPA) reported 561 course enrollments in SY 2011-12, a 17% increase from 2010-11. The program received an appropriation of \$481,849 for SY 2011-12. A weighted funding provision was passed in SY 2008-09 that provided additional funding for schools offering distance courses to other Iowa schools through the use of the Iowa Communication Network.¹⁵⁸ Kirkwood High School Distance Learning is a program of Kirkwood Community College and works with school districts across Iowa to offer online transfer credit courses to students looking for credit recovery opportunities. Kirkwood served 620 course enrollments in SY 2011-12, a 22% increase from 2010-11.

¹⁵⁸ I.C.A. 257.11; retrieved June 6, 2012, <http://coolice.legis.state.ia.us/Cool-ICE/default.asp?Category=billinfo&Service=IowaCode&input=257.11>



Kansas has extensive district-level online learning activity, including full-time schools drawing from across the state. The Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE) has had a comprehensive set of policies for online schools and programs, including extensive reporting, for several years. The state reported 2,952 full-time students in SY 2011-12, plus individual course enrollments totaling an FTE of 5,138, an increase of 5%.¹⁵⁹ Previous to 2011-12, the state could only report FTEs.

In SY 2011-12 there were 51 virtual opportunities: 37 supplemental programs and 14 full-time schools.¹⁶⁰ One program closed after SY 2011-12, and 42 programs opened. Of the 37 supplemental programs, 24 are administered by districts, seven by service centers, five at the building level, and one is private.

The Virtual School Act, K.S.A. 72-3711 to 72-3716 (2008),¹⁶¹ increased supervision and regulation of all virtual schools by KSDE and changed funding of online students. All virtual schools/programs are audited annually. Extensive documentation is available on the KSDE website, including an explanation of Virtual Education Requirements.¹⁶²

State law allows districts to make agreements for inter-district attendance for supplemental online courses; a number of districts have agreements with all districts in the state. Approved virtual schools multiply full-time equivalent enrollments by 105% of the amount of base state aid per pupil. Virtual students are determined with a two-day count defined in the KSDE Enrollment Handbook.

Additional policy details can be found at www.kpk12.com/states/.

¹⁵⁹ Personal communication with KSDE; June 12, 2012

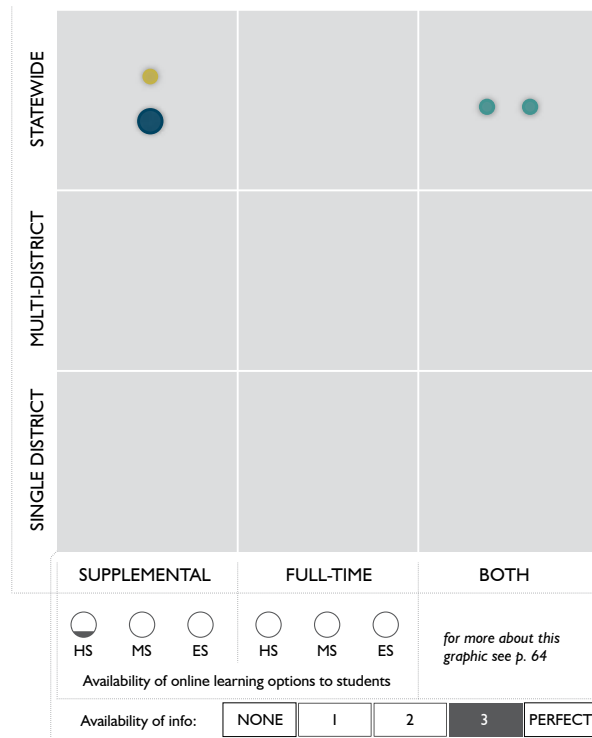
¹⁶⁰ KSDE Virtual School/Program Information Page, including lists of the providers approved for each school year; retrieved June 8, 2012, <http://www.ksde.org/Default.aspx?tabid=455>

¹⁶¹ Virtual School Act (2008); retrieved August 30, 2012, http://kansasstatutes.lesterama.org/Chapter_72/Article_37/

¹⁶² Virtual Education Requirements; retrieved June 8, 2012, <http://www.ksde.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=Gwv-QMrXn0I%3d&tabid=455&mid=6620>

KENTUCKY

STATE SNAPSHOT 2012

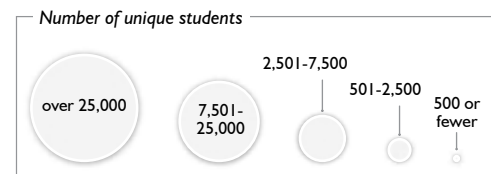


State-led initiative

Kentucky Virtual School, one of the oldest state virtual schools, stopped offering courses after the spring 2012 term; it now serves as a source of information for distance programs and students.

Districts

Jefferson County's JCPSeSchool offered over 60 online courses to 6,800 students in grades 6-12 in SY 2010-11, including college credit courses.



Kentucky closed its state virtual school, Kentucky Virtual School (KYVS, founded in 2000) in 2012, but it continues to offer some online options to students through districts. KYVS served an estimated 1,700 course enrollments in SY 2011-12, but stopped directly offering courses at the end of SY 2011-12. The Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) transitioned KYVS into the Kentucky Virtual Campus for K-12,¹⁶³ which is “providing information and support for families and schools to utilize in their evaluation of full-time and part-time online learning options available through multiple statewide providers” through three programs:

- Jefferson County’s JCPSeSchool offers over 60 online courses to students in grades 6-12, including dual credit courses. It is a competency-based curriculum with rolling enrollment; state-level end-of-course exams are required and offered five times a year.
- Barren Academy of Virtual and Expanded Learning (BAVEL) offers full-time and supplemental options to students in grades 6-12. Students must reside in a district that has a non-resident agreement with Barren County. BAVEL served 90 full-time students as well as supplemental course enrollments in SY 2011-12.
- Kentucky Education Television (KET) offers courses to middle school and high school students. Courses combine interactive, online components with digital multimedia.

KDE released *Digital Learning 2020: A Policy Report for Kentucky’s Digital Future*¹⁶⁴ in December 2011. It recommends Kentucky “implement policies to enhance and expand virtual and blended learning, including funding options to ensure equitable access to students across the Commonwealth.”

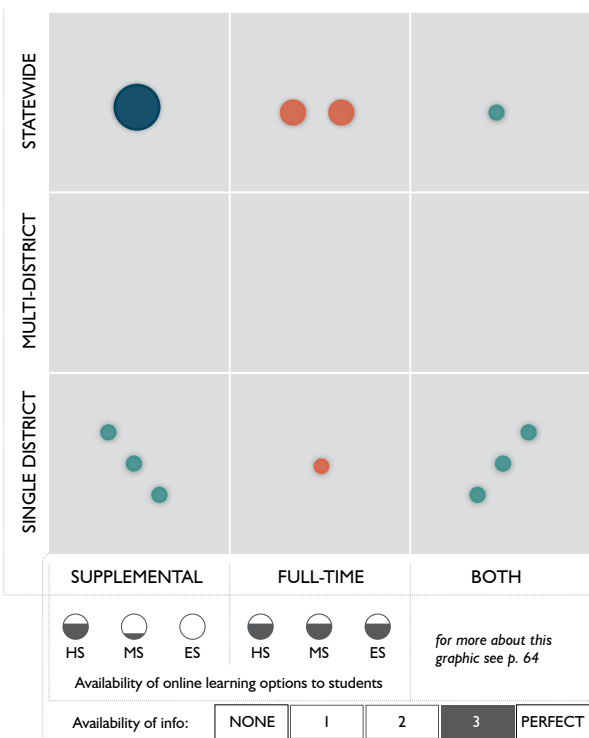
Kentucky does not have inter-district choice, charter schools, or charter school legislation. Inter-district agreements do not apply to virtual schools. KYVS was funded from state appropriations, course fees, and tuition. The 2012 state budget includes \$764,000 for virtual learning; a small amount of funds remaining in fall 2012 are going toward the Kentucky Virtual Campus.

¹⁶³ Kentucky Virtual Campus for K-12; retrieved August 26, 2012, <http://www.kyvc4k12.org>

¹⁶⁴ *Digital Learning 2020: A Policy Report for Kentucky’s Digital Future*; retrieved June 8, 2012, <http://www.education.ky.gov/Users/spalmer/December%202011%20Digital%20Learning%20Report%20FINAL.pdf>

LOUISIANA

STATE SNAPSHOT 2012



■ Full-time options

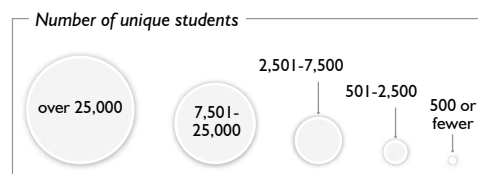
The first two virtual charters in the state served 2,000 students in SY 2011-12.

■ State virtual school

Louisiana Virtual School served 4,991 unique students and 9,179 course enrollments in 2011-12.

■ State-led initiative

The new Course Choice program intends to expand supplemental and full-time options for students in 2013-14.



Louisiana has a state virtual school, three fully online charters, and an increasing number of district programs. Act 2 (2012) is laying the groundwork to expand online options for K-12 students in Louisiana over the next few years. Two virtual charters began serving students statewide in fall 2011. Louisiana Connections Academy (LACA) and Louisiana Virtual Charter Academy (LAVCA), and the Louisiana Virtual School (LVS) served 9,179 course enrollments in SY 2011-12.

LVS, the state virtual school, started in fall 2000 and is a supplemental program for grades 6-12; it offers 59 unique course titles. In 2011-12, students from 286 schools from 113 districts, diocesan systems, and independent charter and nonpublic schools participated with LVS. In 2011-12, there were 4,991 students in 6,086 course seats (a mix of block, one-semester, and full-year course enrollments), equivalent to 9,179 one-semester enrollments, an annual increase of 7%.¹⁶⁵

LACA is authorized by the Louisiana State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) to serve students in grades K-12. BESE approved raising the maximum enrollment cap from 500 to 1,000 for SY 2012-13; it is allowed to exceed the cap by 20%. LAVCA, a K12 Inc. school, is available to Louisiana students in grades K-10; returning 10th graders can enroll in 11th grade. It served 1,250 students in SY 2011-12. District programs have opened in Vermilion, St. Mary, St. Martin, Lafourche, and Rapides Parishes in 2012, providing both full-time and supplemental options to students. Typically, in-district students can attend the school for little or no tuition, and out-of-district students can enroll if there is space and they pay tuition. These district programs are positioned to apply to be statewide providers beginning in 2013 under Act 2 (discussed below).

¹⁶⁵ Personal communication with Louisiana Department of Education, June 13, 2012

State policies

Act 2 (HB976, 2012) will expand options for students through four separate components:¹⁶⁶

- The Course Choice program will allow approved course providers to offer supplemental courses to students. School Performance Scores applied through Louisiana’s School Accountability System will determine student access and funding; students attending schools graded C, D, and F and students attending A and B schools¹⁶⁷ where there are no equivalent course offerings will have the right to enroll in any course and have the funding paid for out of each LEA’s minimum foundation program (MFP) funding.¹⁶⁸ The Louisiana Department of Education will pay 10% of the MFP funding to the resident district for administration; the remaining funding will be distributed to the provider: 50% upon the student’s beginning of the course, and 50% upon completion. The provider Request for Application was released in July 2012, course providers will be approved in December; and a full course catalog will be published in January 2013.¹⁶⁹
- The Student Scholarships for Educational Excellence Program¹⁷⁰ allows students in a public school rated C, D, or F and with a family income of less than 250% of the federal poverty level to attend an approved non-public or A and B rated public school. The state’s MFP funding follows the student to the school. There are no full-time online schools on the approved list for 2012-13.
- Charter school expansion: HB976 also amends the application process for charter schools and provides for a new type of chartering authority, known as local charter authorizers, which can be “philanthropies, universities and colleges, or nonprofit boards started by municipal or parish governments to authorize local charter schools.”¹⁷¹
- Recovery School District (RSD): The law allows parents of students attending chronically failing schools to vote to have schools placed in the state-run RSD.

LVS will “continue to exist to provide course offerings not provided through Course Choice that are essential to the academic progress of Louisiana students. In the future, subsidies to maintain uniform tuition levels for all LVS course offerings will disappear, leading to “cost-based’ tuition levels for each different LVS course offering.”¹⁷² Louisiana Virtual School course enrollment fees of \$150 per student per course enrollment are paid for by the student’s district, school, or local educational authority (LEA).¹⁷³

Quality assurance, teaching, and curriculum

The Department of Education published State Standards for Distance Education¹⁷⁴ in January 2000 that cover online learning and other types of distance education. The State Standards for Distance Education do not apply to charter schools, but do apply to the state virtual school and district programs.

¹⁶⁶ Act 2 (2012); retrieved August 26, 2012, http://www.doe.state.la.us/topics/act2_choice_law.html

¹⁶⁷ Louisiana’s School Accountability System; retrieved August 27, 2012, <http://www.doe.state.la.us/performance/>

¹⁶⁸ Minimum Foundation Program (MFP) Administration; retrieved July 3, 2012, http://www.doe.state.la.us/divisions/edfn/mfp_admin.html

¹⁶⁹ Course Choice program; retrieved August 26, 2012, <http://www.doe.state.la.us/coursechoice/>

¹⁷⁰ Student Scholarships for Educational Excellence Program; retrieved August 31, 2012, http://www.doe.state.la.us/topics/scholarships_for_excellence.html

¹⁷¹ Memorandum from LDE to Louisiana Educators regarding the School Choice Legislation; retrieved August 26, 2012, http://www.doe.state.la.us/topics/act2_choice_law.html

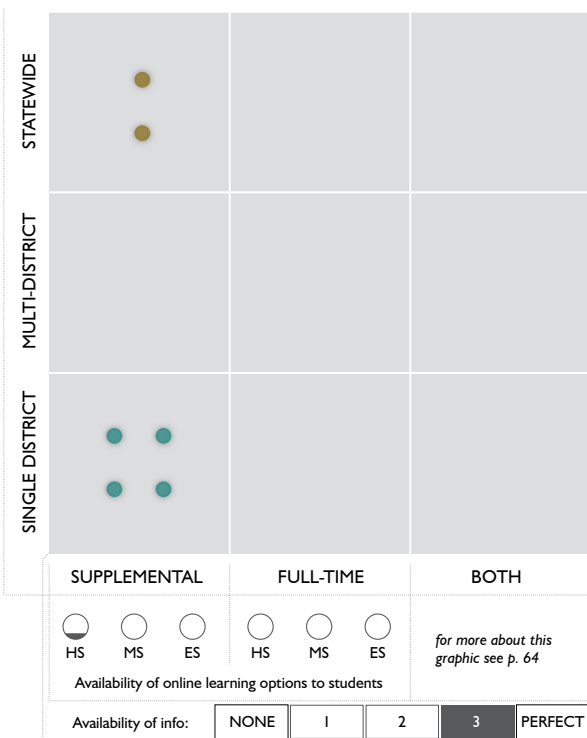
¹⁷² FAQs from June 27/28 Course Choice Webinars; retrieved August 25, 2012, <http://www.louisianaschools.net/lde/uploads/20009.pdf>

¹⁷³ LVS 2012 - 2013 Agreements and Costs; retrieved June 20, 2012, <http://www.louisianavirtuallschool.net/index.php>

¹⁷⁴ State Standards for Distance Education, January 2000, published by the Louisiana Department of Education; retrieved August 27, 2012, <http://www.doe.state.la.us/lde/uploads/2756.pdf>

MAINE

STATE SNAPSHOT 2012



State-led initiative

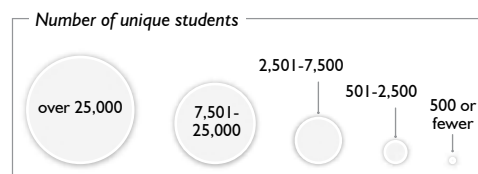
Maine Online Learning Program has approved three online providers (Apex Learning, Connections Academy, and K12 Inc.) for districts to use.

Full-time options

LD1553 (2011) allowed charter schools, including virtual charter schools, although none has been approved as of June 2012.

Districts

There were 833 course enrollments from 45 schools through The VHS Collaborative in SY 2011-12.



Online learning has been limited in Maine, as the state has no major statewide online programs. LD1553 (2011)¹⁷⁵ allowed charter schools in Maine for the first time (although only 10 charter schools over 10 years, four of which have already been approved), and created a State Charter School Commission as the only entity that can authorize virtual charter schools. However, none has been approved for SY 2012-13. (Other types of authorizing entities are allowed in the law, and they can authorize charter schools that have an online component.) The commission debated the opening of two virtual charter schools in its June 2012 meeting but decided to postpone approving them, noting a need for proper training to review future applications, among other issues.¹⁷⁶ As of September 2012 it appears that the Commission may consider virtual charter school applications before the end of 2012. The legislature passed a resolution to create a working group to study multidistrict online learning options in Maine, with a final report due in January 2013.¹⁷⁷

LD1553 had several quality assurance measures; details can be found at www.kpk12.com/states/.

Existing online learning options in Maine include:¹⁷⁸

- The Maine Online Learning Program (MOLP) was created by SP0531 (2009)¹⁷⁹ to promote online learning programs and courses for K-12 students. MOLP is meeting its goals primarily

¹⁷⁵ LD1553; retrieved June 13, 2012, http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/bills/bills_125th/billtexts/SP049601.asp

¹⁷⁶ Maine Charter School Commission Meeting June 15, 2012; retrieved July 10, 2012, <http://www.maine.gov/csc/meetings/06152012minutes.html>

¹⁷⁷ LD675 (2012); retrieved September 18, 2012, http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/bills/bills_125th/chapters/RESOLVE116.asp

¹⁷⁸ The descriptions of online programs in Maine are from "A Review of Online Learning Initiatives," Spring 2010; unpublished report provided by Maine Department of Education

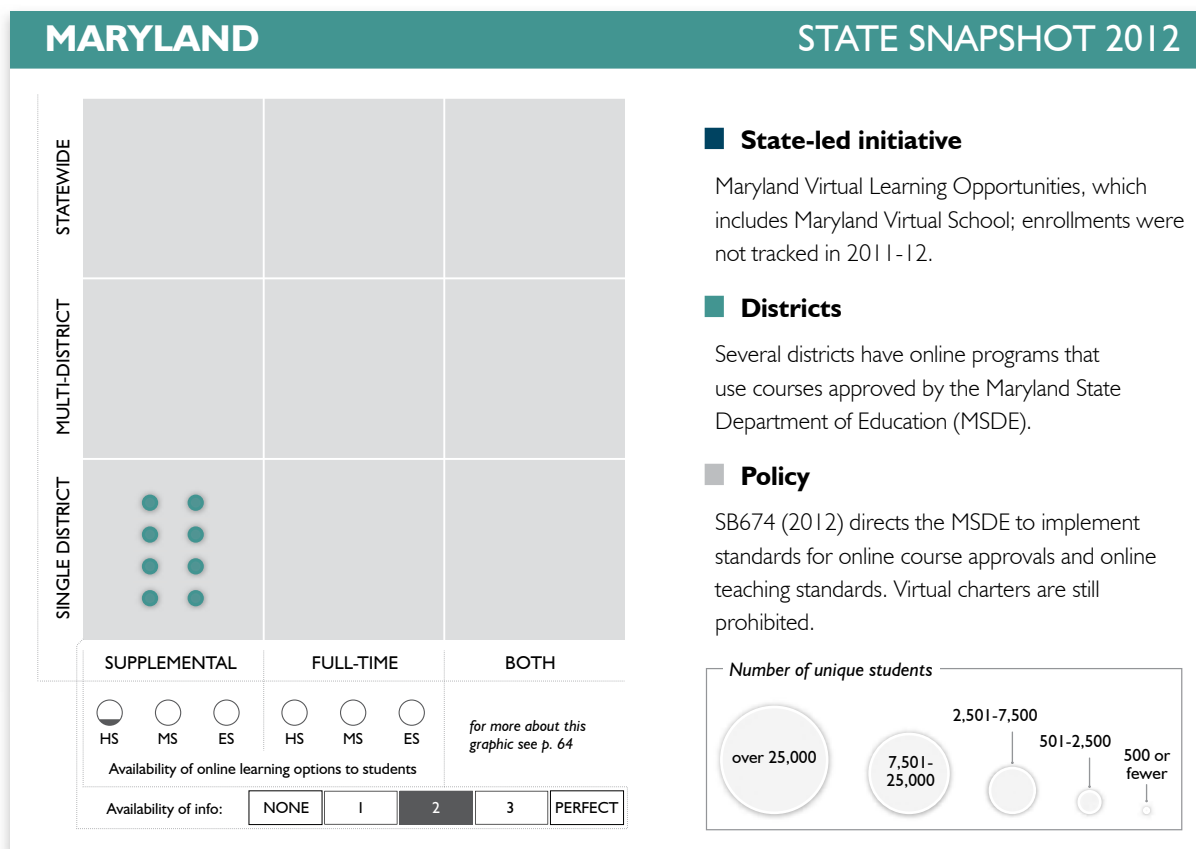
¹⁷⁹ Maine public law, Chapter 330; retrieved June 13, 2012, http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/bills/bills_124th/chappdfs/PUBLIC330.pdf; further quotes are from this source

by establishing an approved list of providers for districts. As of September 2012, the Maine Department of Education (MDE) has approved three providers: Apex Learning, Connections Academy, and K12 Inc.¹⁸⁰ According to the legislation, the MDE was required to report online data annually (beginning with SY 2011-12) to the legislature, including a list of programs and courses offered, the number of participating students, student performance, expenditures, and the number of students unable to enroll because of space limitations. The report has not been created as of September 2012.

- The VHS Collaborative has 45 member schools (17% of all middle and high schools) in Maine. It reported 833 course enrollments (96% of which are high school students) in SY 2011-12.
- AP4ALL was established to provide equity of access to Advanced Placement courses for low-income students; it is managed by the MDE. It reported 247 enrollments in 2011-12.
- The University of Maine's Academ-e program offers 22 courses and has about 220 juniors and seniors from Maine high schools participating in university courses each semester. The program is funded through two sources: the University of Maine, which discounts tuition by 50%, and the legislature's Aspirations Program which covers the remaining 50%.
- In 2009-10, K12 Inc. started a pilot program with two Maine school districts: Regional School Unit 2 and Maine School Administrative District 31. In 2011-12, about 100 students from five schools took at least one online course.
- The Maine Learning Technology Initiative has equipped all of the state's 7th and 8th grade students and teachers with one-to-one access to wireless notebook computers and the Internet for the past 10 years. Currently, the program is providing equipment and support to 55% of Maine's high schools. All middle and high schools are provided wireless notebook computers for faculty and administrators through the program. In addition, all middle and high schools are provided a state-of-the-art wireless network infrastructure. The new computers will come with software that links parents to state Department of Labor services, including career centers.¹⁸¹
- School systems now use IP-based video conferencing equipment that leverages the state's education broadband network, the Maine School and Library Network (MSLN). MSLN is managed by NetworkMaine, a joint venture by the MDE, Maine State Library, University of Maine, and Maine Office of Information Technology. MSLN provides broadband services to schools and public libraries at no cost. NetworkMaine also maintains an 80-client video conferencing bridge allowing schools to host multipoint video conferences.

¹⁸⁰ Approved providers list; retrieved September 1, 2012, <http://www.maine.gov/education/technology/molp/approved.html>

¹⁸¹ Maine SDE press release; retrieved June 13, 2012, <http://www.maine.gov/tools/whatsnew/index.php?topic=DOENews&id=69205&v=article>



Maryland has a state-led initiative with Maryland Virtual Learning Opportunities (MVLO) and several districts that offer online courses approved by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE). Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Frederick, Prince George’s, Montgomery, and Washington County Public Schools and several other counties offer locally developed online courses approved by the MSDE.

State policies

HB1197 (2002)¹⁸² authorized the MSDE to develop standards for teachers and other school system employees for the offering of online courses or services, to review courses and courseware to “assure quality and alignment with the Maryland content standards and other appropriate standards,” and to purchase and develop Internet-based learning resources and courses for students and staff.¹⁸³ The law required the MSDE to “review courses and courseware to assure quality and alignment with the Maryland content standards and other appropriate standards.” Under MSDE guidelines, schools can only award credit toward a Maryland high school diploma for online courses approved by the MSDE (the approval process is outlined below). The MSDE defines an online course as one that is “provided by Internet or other technologies in which 80% or more of instruction is conducted online with the teacher and student separated by distance or time or both and in which two-way communication between the teacher and student is required.”¹⁸⁴ A district may offer a blended learning course that has up to 80% of the instruction conducted online without going through the MSDE approval process.

¹⁸² House Bill 1197; retrieved July 4, 2012, <http://mlis.state.md.us/PDF-Documents/2002rs/bills/hb/hb1197t.pdf>

¹⁸³ The State of Online Learning in Maryland 2010-11, Maryland State Department of Education; retrieved July 4, 2012, http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/NR/tonlyres/D895AEF0-476A-46CF-86E5-A77C87A4E129/27450/OnlineLearning_MD_2010_2011.pdf

¹⁸⁴ MSDE memorandum March 7, 2012; retrieved July 16, 2012, http://mdk12online.org/docs/Memo_Supt_Summer_School_Online_Courses.pdf

SB674 (2012)¹⁸⁵ directs the MSDE to develop “standards for teachers and other school system employees for the offering of courses or services on the Internet or through other developing technologies,” and to review online courses to assure quality and alignment with Maryland content guidelines and other appropriate process and procedures, such as the Common Core State Standards adopted by Maryland in 2010. The law allows the MSDE, in addition to its own online course reviews, to delegate the authority to review and recommend online courses to a district or other MSDE-approved entity, and allows either the MSDE or districts to charge a “vendor fee”¹⁸⁶ to review a course for recommendation and approval.

In June 2012, the MSDE released *Process and Procedures for Offering Student Online Courses in Maryland Public Schools*¹⁸⁷ to meet the requirements of SB674. This document outlines school district responsibilities for providing online courses and the online course review process. It provides guidelines on how to convert face-to-face courses to online courses, establishes minimum training for online teachers, states the MSDE responsibilities in the course approval process, and describes the MSDE role in monitoring adherence to the *Process and Procedures*. Specific requirements of the course review and approval process include:

- If a course review is not delegated to a district, the MSDE has 120 days from the receipt of a request from a provider to complete the review process and notify the requestor.
- Course review committees must consist of at least three teachers, one of whom is an online course reviewer trained by the MSDE or through a certified training program approved by the MSDE.
- All reviewers, district and state, will use the MSDE tool Standards for Reviewing High School Online Courses or another tool approved by MSDE.
- When conducting district reviews, the district sets vendor fees and manages related costs.
- A district must submit 15% of vendor fees collected to MSDE to support ongoing activities related to online student courses.
- Once a review from a district or contracted course review provider is completed, the review is submitted to the MSDE for final approval, to ensure that the course review aligns with MSDE process and procedures.
- Once a course request is submitted, the MSDE must respond to the requestor within 15 days from the receipt of request.
- When a school district submits a completed course review and accompanying documentation, MSDE will advise the district of approval status. Approved courses will appear on MSDE’s approved online course list within 45 days of the receipt of all required documents. Districts may offer courses only after they are added to the list.
- The MSDE reserves the right to require a new review of an approved online course every three years.

The *Process and Procedures* document also sets standards for training and experience required for online teachers. Online teachers must have:

- Participated in at least one online course as a student.
- Successfully completed a three-credit facilitator course designed for the K-12 environment.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁵ Maryland SB674 (2012); retrieved July 9, 2012, <http://mlis.state.md.us/2012rs/bills/sb/sb0674t.pdf>

¹⁸⁶ MSDE will charge a fee to conduct online course reviews. Districts are free to set their own vendor fee for course reviews.

¹⁸⁷ The MSDE document *Process and Procedures for Offering Student Online Courses in Maryland Public Schools* has been distributed to districts and implemented, but is not posted on the MSDE website.

¹⁸⁸ The *Process and Procedures* document provides examples of acceptable three-credit online teaching options such as the MSDE course *Online Teaching in Maryland* or the PBS *TeacherLine* course *The Fundamentals of Virtual K-12 Teaching*.

- Shadowed an experienced online teacher for at least four weeks or the length of a two-credit course.
- Valid certification in the course content area being taught.

Also in 2012, HB745¹⁸⁹ creates the Maryland Advisory Council for Virtual Learning, which will report annual recommendations to the state superintendent regarding digital learning issues, including but not limited to:

- Teacher professional development regarding “digital instruction or blending digital content with traditional classroom instruction.”
- Student assessment and accountability.
- Aligning resources and digital learning initiatives of all of the state agencies.
- Coordination of digital learning programs to prevent redundancy and inefficiency.
- Implementation plans for providing digital learning opportunities to all students.

HB1362 (2010) authorized school districts to establish a virtual public school subject to the approval of MSDE.¹⁹⁰ The legislation did not state whether a public school student has the choice of enrolling in online courses in programs outside the resident school district. No funding was appropriated to support the activities of HB1362, and no new district programs had been initiated as of August 2012. The legislation required that the curriculum of a virtual school “have an interactive program with significant online components,” but it does not define the specifics of “interactive,” or the extent to which “online components” should be incorporated in a course. Also, a virtual school must maintain an office in the state and is not allowed to provide funds for the purchase of instructional programs or materials to a student, parent, or guardian. The law did not change an existing provision of a charter school law that requires that students be “physically present on school premises.”¹⁹¹ Without funding support, and with the cost associated with the online course review and approval process, establishment of virtual charter schools by local school districts is not likely to occur in SY 2012-13.

Online programs

MVLO was established by HB1197 (2002)¹⁹² and § 7-1002. Maryland Virtual School (MVS) is one of two components of MVLO directed by the MSDE. MVS acts as a supplemental online provider for courses bearing high school graduation credit and other services to districts, and it provides online professional development. MVS also offers online High School Assessment courses tuition-free to students. Students may take a course through MVS only with permission from their local school district. Course fees are paid either by the school district or the student’s family. Fees range from \$25 per student per course for districts that want to use a course the MSDE owns or leases, to \$800 for a course provided by a vendor.

MVS provides many of the services associated with state virtual schools. It reviews and approves online courses that local school systems (LSS) can offer; publishes the catalog and technical requirements for courses offered through MVS; and provides approved vendor contact information. MVS hires and trains online teachers upon request of the LSS, supplied by the online course vendor. Due to MSDE budget and staff constraints, the online course enrollment process has been delegated to the districts, and enrollment statistics have not been tracked over the past few years. Enrollment data will be requested from districts in SY 2012-13.

¹⁸⁹ HB745; retrieved July 28, 2012, <http://mlis.state.md.us/2012rs/bills/hb/hb0745t.pdf>

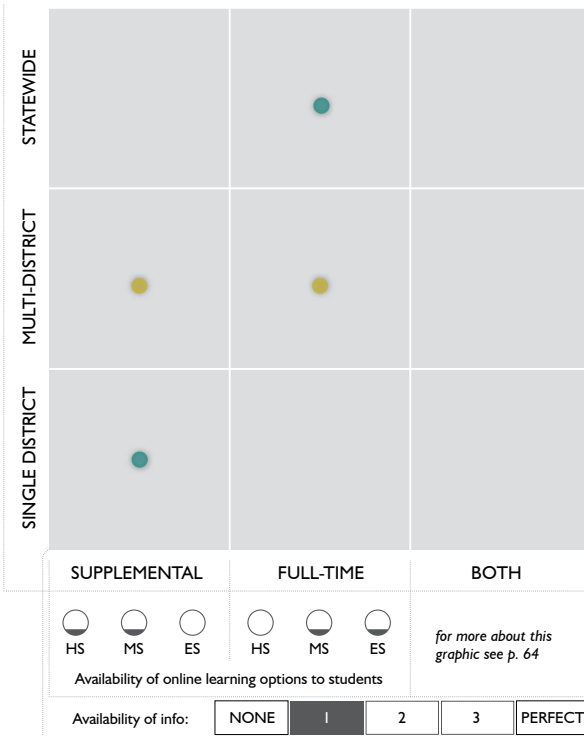
¹⁹⁰ HB1362; retrieved July 16, 2012, <http://mlis.state.md.us/2010rs/billfile/hb1362.htm>

¹⁹¹ Maryland Education Code § 9-102; retrieved July 16, 2012, http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/programs/charter_schools/docs/md_charter_school_laws

¹⁹² HB1197; retrieved July 16, 2012, <http://mlis.state.md.us/2002rs/billfile/hb1197.htm>

MASSACHUSETTS

STATE SNAPSHOT 2012

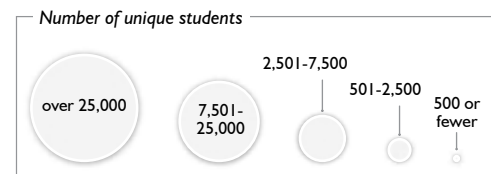


■ Full-time options

Massachusetts Virtual Academy at Greenfield (MAVA) opened in 2010-11 and enrolled 484 students in grades K-8 in SY 2011-12.

■ Districts

6,213 enrollments from 202 high schools (64% of the middle and high schools in the state) through The VHS Collaborative in SY 2011-12.



Massachusetts has one full-time online school operating statewide accepting students in grades K-8 and continuing 9th grade students; a state-led initiative to provide tools and resources to educators; and 9,227 students who took courses sponsored by their school districts in 2010-11 (the most recent year for which data are available). This is an 11% decrease from 2009-10.¹⁹³ Massachusetts schools had 6,213 course enrollments in The VHS Collaborative (VHS), formerly known as the Virtual High School Global Consortium, the most of any state (VHS is located in Massachusetts).

Massachusetts passed a sweeping education law in January 2010 that permitted the opening of innovation schools, including virtual innovation schools (603 CMR 48.05).¹⁹⁴ Innovation schools are non-charter, district schools that can operate with more autonomy and flexibility than a traditional public school. In July 2010, the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) adopted new guidelines for innovation schools, including the clarification that virtual innovation schools are permitted.¹⁹⁵ The guidelines cap enrollment for online schools at 500 students, require that 25% of those students live in the district operating the school, require that no more than 2% of a school's enrollments come from any single district, and give the education commissioner the power to approve any requests to waive restrictions. Online students have to comply with state requirements for class time, which is defined for high school students as completing 990 hours of "structured learning" annually. In addition, classes must meet the state's academic standards,

¹⁹³ Enrollment numbers obtained through personal communication with Massachusetts Department of Education; June 21, 2011.

¹⁹⁴ Innovation Schools Statute: Mass. General Laws Chapter 71, Section 92 (as added by Section 8 of Chapter 12 of the Acts of 2010); retrieved August 5, 2012, http://www.doe.mass.edu/boe/docs/0710/item2_statute.pdf

¹⁹⁵ Board of Elementary and Secondary Education innovation school guidelines; retrieved August 5, 2012, <http://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/603cmr48.html>

which specify what subject matter should be taught at each grade level.¹⁹⁶ Students also must take the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) summative tests.¹⁹⁷

Online programs

Massachusetts Virtual Academy at Greenfield (MAVA) was the first full-time online school to be created under the new law. It opened in fall 2010 in partnership with K12 Inc. after receiving a waiver from the BESE that allowed it to have only 2% of its students live in the district operating the school. MAVA enrolled 484 students in grades K-8 in 2011-12, an increase of 55% from SY 2010-11. It is authorized to serve up to 500 students; students may apply to enter in grades K-8 and graduating 8th graders may continue in 9th grade in SY 2012-13. Though MAVA has sought to expand to include new enrollments in grades 9-12, the BESE did not approve that request for either 2011-12 or 2012-13.¹⁹⁸

In 2010-11, 48% of the school districts in Massachusetts reported having at least one student taking an online course; this is up from 43% in 2009-10.¹⁹⁹ This translates to 9,227 students taking an online course paid for or sponsored by their district. In addition, 202 schools (64% of the middle and high schools in the state) had 6,213 students who participated in online courses through VHS in 2011-12, a 12% increase. It is unclear if the statewide enrollment number includes VHS enrollments.

Massachusetts has a state-led learning portal, MassONE, which offers online tools and resources to pre-K-12 teachers and students in grades 5-12. Teachers roster students into classes for blended coursework. There were 7,172 active teachers and students between September 2011 and June 2012; *Keeping Pace* previously reported the number of user accounts, which was 30,223 for the previous time period.

The Educational Collaborative (TEC) Online Academy was formed in 2009 by 14 school districts seeking to expand college prep, AP, and honors class options for their students. It serves 200 high school students with a catalog of 30 courses that are funded via a student fee typically paid by the sending district. Forty teachers have gone through online teaching professional development.

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education launched a pilot program in 2009-10 in online assessment for students taking the Massachusetts English Proficiency Assessment; more than 66,000 students were tested in 2011.²⁰⁰ The pilot will continue to grow until the entire MCAS will be offered online.

Massachusetts does not have any legislation governing supplemental online courses. However, in 2003 the ESE published “Massachusetts Recommended Criteria for Distance Learning Courses.”²⁰¹

¹⁹⁶ Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks; retrieved August 5, 2012, <http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/current.html>

¹⁹⁷ Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System; August 5, 2012, <http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/>

¹⁹⁸ MAVA waiver; retrieved August 31, 2012, <http://www.doe.mass.edu/boe/docs/2012-05/item5.html>

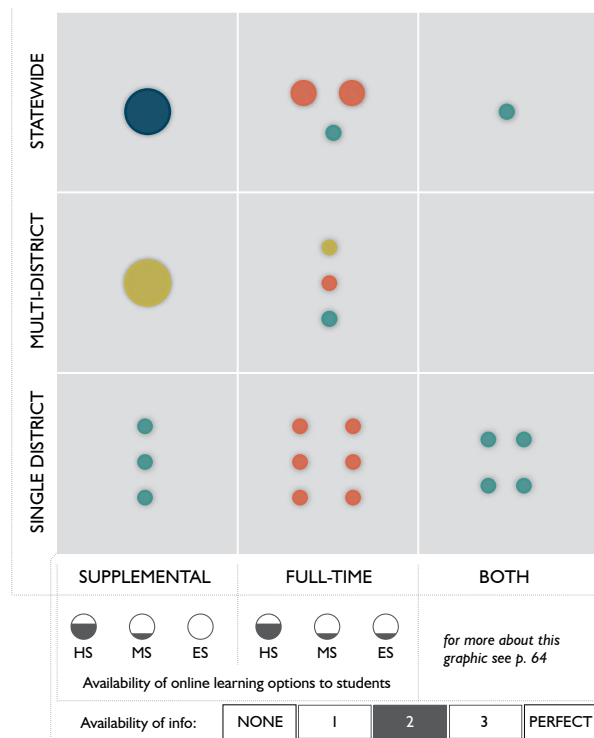
¹⁹⁹ Personal communication with Luis Rodriguez, BESE; August 2012. Note that all statewide numbers are reported for 2010-11, the most recent year for which data are available.

²⁰⁰ MEPA 2011 results; retrieved August 17, 2012, <http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/mepa/results.html?yr=2011>

²⁰¹ Recommended Criteria for Distance Learning Courses, November 2003; retrieved August 31, 2012, http://www.doe.mass.edu/edtech/news03/dl_letter.html

MICHIGAN

STATE SNAPSHOT 2012



■ Full-time online students

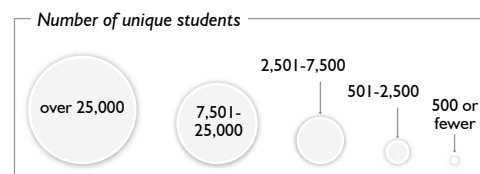
4,049 students served in SY 2011-12; this total includes enrollments from the two cyber schools and 2,646 students enrolled as full-time through the seat-time waiver.

■ Consortium

GenNET is a consortium of districts that served 16,321 course enrollments in SY 2011-12, a 39% increase from the previous year.

■ State virtual school

Michigan Virtual School served 19,822 course enrollments in 2011-12.



Michigan has one of the larger state virtual schools, Michigan Virtual School (MVS); a large consortium program, GenNET, operated by the Genesee ISD with over 400 districts participating; a number of district programs; and online charter schools. State law limited the number of cyber charters to two in SY 2011-12, but the cap on cyber schools was raised in May 2012 to a maximum of 15 in 2015.

Michigan passed major cyber school legislation in 2012, SB619.²⁰² The law includes the following provisions:²⁰³

- Raises the existing cap on the number of cyber schools (previously two). Allows cyber schools to enroll students from anywhere in the state, offer enrollment to any grade level (K-12), and act as a course provider to any school or district.
- Increases the cap on each cyber school's enrollments to 2,500 students during the first year of operation, 5,000 the second year, and 10,000 students in the third and subsequent years of operation.
- Limits the total statewide cyber school enrollment for SY 2013-14²⁰⁴ to 2% of Michigan's total public school enrollment during SY 2011-12 (about 30,000). If statewide cyber school enrollment exceeds this threshold, no new cyber schools will be approved and existing cyber schools will not be allowed to enroll new students.

²⁰² SB619 (2012); retrieved June 12, 2012, <http://www.legislature.mi.gov/documents/2011-2012/publicact/pdf/2012-PA-0129.pdf>

²⁰³ AFT Michigan Report; retrieved July 2, 2012, <http://aftmichigan.org/files/capitolAP12.pdf>

²⁰⁴ SB619 (2012) limits the total statewide cyber school enrollment to 1% of the total student enrollment in the state for SY 2012-13, but is irrelevant since the law does not take effect until March 31, 2013.

- Requires that a computer, Internet service subsidy, and parent orientation be provided to each student's family.
- Removes the requirement that students previously be enrolled in public school, and drops the requirement that cyber schools enroll a matching percentage of dropouts to new student enrollments.
- Allows traditional school districts, intermediate school districts, and community colleges (within the college's regional boundaries) to each authorize one "school of excellence that is a cyber school." Statewide authorizing bodies²⁰⁵ are limited to authorizing in aggregate a total of five cyber charters in 2013, 10 in 2014, and 15 after 2014.

SB619 does not take effect until March 31, 2013. Although the number of cyber charter schools is expected to grow, that growth is unlikely until SY 2013-14.

In 2008, Michigan's Superintendent of Public Instruction implemented a process that allowed school districts to seek a waiver of the state's pupil accounting rules to allow eligible full-time students to take all of their coursework online. As of March 30, 2012, MDE reported that 2,646 students were taking 100% of their classes online.²⁰⁶

The School Aid Act (Public Act 201)²⁰⁷ for FY 2013 allocates \$200 million for districts engaged in best practices and meeting required performance metrics. Of this total, \$120 million is recommended for districts that meet five of six best practices. One of the identified best practices calls for districts to offer online instructional programs or blended learning opportunities to all pupils. To satisfy this requirement, districts must make all eligible students and their parents aware of these opportunities.

The School Aid Act now allows Michigan Virtual University (MVU; the parent organization of MVS) to draw exclusively on state general fund dollars. Previously, more than 50% of the appropriation support for MVU came from federal grants. A portion of the funding increase expands the role of MVU/MVS in various areas related to policy, capacity building, and research and innovation. This legislation directs MVU to establish the Center for Online Learning Research and Innovation. The center's responsibilities include support and acceleration of innovation, including "research of online and blended education models, and analyzing the effectiveness of online learning in preparing students to be career or college ready." It also provides "leadership for Michigan's system of online and blended learning education which includes making policy recommendations that accelerate the expansion of effective online learning."

Public Act 201 also includes definitions,²⁰⁸ which did not previously exist in state statute, for the following: online instructional program, blended learning, and cyber school.

In 2006, the state legislature was the first in the nation to pass a requirement that Michigan students have an "online learning experience" before graduating.²⁰⁹ Details on the requirement are available at www.kpk12.com/states/.

²⁰⁵ In Michigan the state public universities, Bay Mills Community College (a tribal college), and the Education Achievement System (EAS) may authorize charter schools statewide.

²⁰⁶ The MDE report was required by Public Act 63, 2011, Sec. 903; retrieved July 16, 2012, <http://www.legislature.mi.gov/documents/2011-2012/publicact/pdf/2011-PA-0063.pdf>. The report focused on seat-time waiver data from districts that operate as a school of excellence cyber school, and districts that operate an alternative education program with a seat-time waiver. 215 local school districts/ISDs, or Public School Academies are approved to operate a seat-time waiver for SY 2011-12, of which 151 reported data as a condition of the waiver. Some districts approved to operate a seat-time waiver may not have enrolled students in the program.

²⁰⁷ Michigan Public Act 201; retrieved July 2, 2012, <http://www.legislature.mi.gov/documents/2001-2002/publicact/pdf/2002-PA-0661.pdf>

²⁰⁸ Public Act 201, 2012, Section 98, page 45; retrieved July 2012, <http://www.legislature.mi.gov/documents/2001-2002/publicact/pdf/2002-PA-0661.pdf>

²⁰⁹ Public Acts 123 and 124; retrieved June 12, 2012, http://www.michigan.gov/documents/PA_123_and_124_159920_7.pdf

Online programs

MVS is a private nonprofit entity funded by annual legislative appropriations, course tuition, and private grants. It had 19,822 course enrollments in SY 2011-12, a 12% increase over the same period in 2010-11.

Serving as a broker of online courses, the GenNET Online Learning portal provides schools with access to various formats of online courses from a list of selected providers, including MVS. GenNET is authorized by the MDE to extend its seat-time waiver to partner districts across Michigan, provided that MDE policies and procedures are followed. Courses must be teacher-led to qualify for the seat-time waiver. GenNET facilitated 16,321 course enrollments between districts and providers in SY 2011-12, a 39% increase from the previous year, although the number of districts participating in the consortium fell from about 500 to about 400. About 1,000 of the course enrollments were served by MVS. GenNET operations are funded by a service fee of 10% of the gross revenue generated every quarter by each course vendor. Providers must pay a minimum of \$1,250 per quarter.

In 2011, Michigan's first full-time cyber charter schools were chartered by Grand Valley State University and Ferris State University in partnership with K12 Inc. and Connections Academy, respectively. Michigan Virtual Charter Academy, with curriculum and services provided by K12 Inc., enrolled 703 students in SY 2011-12. Michigan Connections Academy, with curriculum and services provided by Connections Learning, and chartered by Central Michigan University enrolled about 700 students in SY 2011-12.

An educational partnership among local school districts, K12 Inc., and Job Skills Technology Inc. (JST), a Michigan-based corporation, provides online courses using K12 Inc. curriculum and teachers. Participating schools have a School of Choice program that allows them to accept and enroll students from the county the school providing the online courses is in or any contiguous counties.²¹⁰ More than 20 schools were offering online courses through this partnership as of August 2012.²¹¹ Two other initiatives, the Yes Academy (grades 6-12) and Jenison International Academy (grades 7-10), offer full-time course options.

Nexus Academy of Grand Rapids and Nexus Academy of Lansing are blended high school programs with curriculum and services provided by Connections Learning beginning in SY 2012-12. Each school serves grades 9-12 and will limit enrollment to 300 students for SY 2012-13. Connections' FAM Academy of Detroit serves students who have dropped out of high school (grades 9-12) and is capped at 300 students.

Beginning with SY 2012-13, the Virtual Learning Academy Consortium²¹² serves homeschooled students in grades K-8 with curriculum and services supplied by Calvert Education Services.

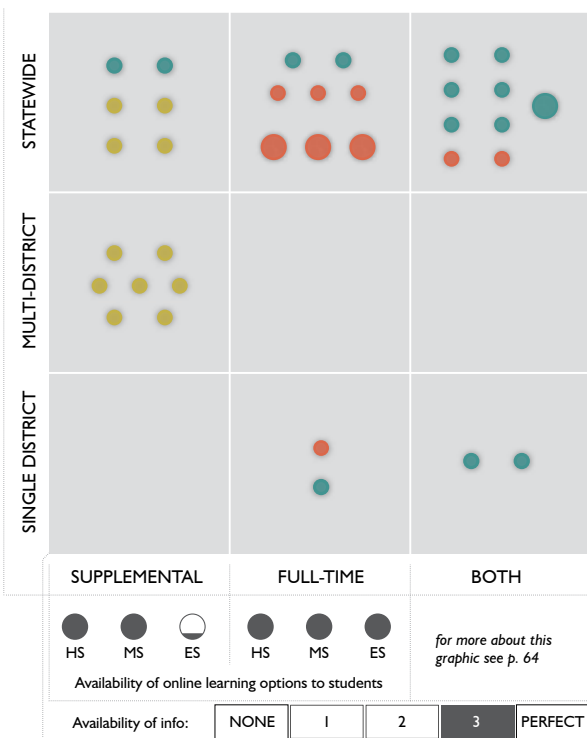
²¹⁰ Michigan State School Aid Act 1979, Section 388.1705c; retrieved July 17, 2012, <http://www.legislature.mi.gov/documents/mcl/pdf/mcl-act-94-of-1979.pdf>

²¹¹ Michigan Virtual School Programs; retrieved July 16, 2012, <http://mik12learning.com/index.html>

²¹² Virtual Learning Academy Consortium is a program of Howell Public Schools, in partnership with Oakland Schools; retrieved July 16, 2012, <http://virtualllearningacademyconsortium.org/>

MINNESOTA

STATE SNAPSHOT 2012



State-led initiative

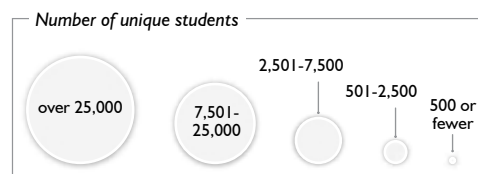
Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) has approved 30 online providers and their courses, and it utilizes the Minnesota Learning Commons web portal to provide information on K-12 online learning opportunities in the state.

Number of students

Full-time: 8,146 students with 67,523 course enrollments; Supplemental: 5,680 students with 9,383 course enrollments in programs reporting to the MDE in SY 2011-12.

Policy

An audit released in September 2011 analyzed online offerings in the state, including programs that do not normally report to the MDE.



Minnesota has online charter schools, multi-district programs, single district programs, and intermediate districts and consortia of schools, although no state virtual school. There were 76,906 course enrollments in full- and part-time programs reporting to the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) in SY 2011-12. The Omnibus K-12 Education Act of 2003 (amended in 2009)²¹³ set forth a number of policies affecting online education. It also directed the MDE to develop and maintain a list of approved online learning providers and a list of courses and programs that it has reviewed and approved. This approval process is state-level policy and covers most online learning programs except district-level programs that offer only supplemental online courses to students enrolled in the district's schools. Minnesota was among the first states to allow students to choose a single online course from among multiple providers and remains one of the few states to do so.

SF1528 (2012) adds significant detail to previous online learning legislation.²¹⁴ It includes the following provisions, all effective July 1, 2012, except where noted:

- All college and university teacher preparation programs “must include in their teacher preparation programs the knowledge and skills teacher candidates need to deliver digital and blended learning and curriculum and engage students with technology,” effective for candidates entering a teacher preparation program after June 30, 2014.
- Staff development activities must include the ability to “accommodate the delivery of digital and blended learning and curriculum and engage students with technology.”
- The approval process for online learning providers is detailed.
- Updated and new definitions for digital learning, blended learning, online learning, and online learning provider are included.

²¹³ 124D.09, Minnesota Statutes 2007; retrieved July 14, 2012, http://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/bin/getpub.php?pubtype=STAT_CHAP_SEC&year=current§ion=124D.09

²¹⁴ SF1528 (2012); retrieved July 24, 2012, <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/bin/bldbill.php?bill=S1528.3.html&session=1s87>

- When serving only its enrolled students, districts or other public entities are authorized to offer “digital learning” and only need to seek approval if the district is offering full-time online learning or if it offers supplemental online courses to students outside of its district, school, or charter.
- Approved providers must submit program data to “confirm statements of assurances ... and provide program updates including a course list to the commissioner.”
- A procedure for handling complaints against online learning providers is detailed.
- Charges the Online Learning Advisory Council to oversee the development of a catalog of digital learning content by June 30, 2013. The council will also review Minnesota education policies to determine which ones, if any, inhibit digital learning, and report by June 30, 2013.
- An initial appropriation of \$104,000 is provided to “the Department of Education for additional support and staffing related to digital learning and online learning.” The amount will be increased in 2014 and later by \$26,000 each year.

	Supplemental (Part-time)	Full-time	Total	Credit Recovery: Supplemental	Credit Recovery: Full-time
Unique students 2010-11	4,631	9,559	14,190		
Unique students 2011-12	5,680	8,146	13,826		
Growth	+23%	- 15%	- 3%		
Course enrollments 2010-11	6,882	76,447	83,329	835	602
Course enrollments 2011-12	9,383	67,523	76,906	1,310	15
Growth	+36%	- 12%	- 8%	+57%	- 98%
Course completions 2010-11	5,272	51,713	56,985	419	359
Course completions 2011-12	7,912	47,860	55,772	840	11
Growth	+50%	- 7%	- 2%	+100%	- 97%
Completion percentage 2010-11	77%	68%	68%	50%	60%
Completion percentage 2011-12	84%	71%	73%	64%	76%

Table 8: Minnesota course enrollment data provided by Minnesota Department of Education

Online programs

As of July 2012, there are 30 certified online learning public school providers—10 consortia or intermediate districts, 10 charter school programs, and 10 multi-district programs serving students statewide.²¹⁵ Additionally, a searchable database of courses and programs offered by MDE-approved providers is available via the Minnesota Learning Commons. Enrollment data for providers reporting to MDE are shown in Table 8.²¹⁶ This does not include single-district programs, which are not required to be approved or report to the MDE (except in aggregate district reports that do not break out online student numbers). The MDE New Provider Online Learning Option Act Provider Application was updated in June 2011.²¹⁷ Providers submit a letter of intent, apply to the MDE, host a site visit, and follow up with any concerns or outstanding questions. The application includes assurances that all courses meet state standards and are taught by Minnesota-licensed teachers. Beginning in SY 2011-12 all approved providers will participate in a three-year

²¹⁵ Certified Online Learning (OLL) Providers as of July 2012, Minnesota Department of Education (MDE); retrieved July 14, 2012, <http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/StuSuc/EnrollChoice/Online/OnlineLearningProviders/index.htm>

²¹⁶ Annual Report Aggregate Online Learning Certified Program Data, MDE. Individual school enrollment, demographic, and performance data is available at <http://education.state.mn.us/MDEAnalytics/Data.jsp>.

²¹⁷ Online learning option act provider application; retrieved July 14, 2012, <http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/StuSuc/EnrollChoice/Online/OnlineLearningProviders/index.htm>

review process that includes a reflective self-study report for renewal of department approval. This review process and renewal of provider approval may include a site visit. The department reserves the right to investigate complaints of all its approved providers at any time. By the end of SY 2012-13, the MDE expects it will review at least 25% of its oldest approved providers, and all providers will receive a letter from the MDE confirming dates of upcoming Self-Study reports.

Students may choose to enroll in online learning programs in one of the following ways:²¹⁸

- Participate in any approved online learning (OLL) program. No school district or charter school may prohibit a student from participating in online learning.
- Enroll full time in a comprehensive OLL program through open enrollment, charter school enrollment, or through an agreement between boards.
- Enroll in supplemental OLL courses during a single school year to a maximum of 50% of the student's full schedule of courses per term at the enrolling district.
- Enroll in supplemental courses above 50% of the student's course schedule if the enrolling district grants permission or if an agreement is made between schools for instructional services.
- Students may enroll in more than their 1.0 average daily membership for a fee.

The Minnesota Office of the Legislative Auditor released the results of a K-12 online learning program audit in September 2011.²¹⁹ The audit is discussed in detail in the Quality and Accountability section of *Keeping Pace 2011*, beginning on page 41. The audit offers a detailed analysis of full-time and supplemental online programs, including single-district programs that do not typically report to MDE.

BlueSky Online School is primarily a full-time online school that has served students in grades 7-12 since 2000. In March 2011, the MDE sent letters to BlueSky Online School²²⁰ and its authorizer, Novation Opportunities,²²¹ recommending they terminate their relationship and close the school after determining the school was graduating students who had not met state curriculum guidelines. After two years of fighting the closure, the "Minnesota Commissioner of Education has accepted the recommendation of Minnesota's Chief Administrative Law Judge and has ordered the Department of Education (MDE) to rescind and dismiss all contract termination actions."²²² The school is open in SY 2012-13.

The Minnesota Learning Commons (MnLC)—a joint project of University of Minnesota, Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, and the MDE—is a state-led initiative that provides an educational portal for consumer access to credit- and non-credit courses available through K-20 public institutions to help students, educators, advisors, and parents access quality online programs, courses, tools, and resources.²²³ Some courses available through the MnLC require fees, while other resources are provided through licenses purchased by the MnLC. MnLC funding is provided through grants and the budgets of member institutions.

Details about funding, accountability, and quality assurance can be found at www.kpk12.com/states/.

²¹⁸ Minnesota Learning Commons Fast Facts; retrieved July 14, 2012, <http://www.iseek.org/education/onlineenroll.html>

²¹⁹ Office of the Legislative Auditor, State of Minnesota. Evaluation Report: K-12 Online Learning; retrieved July 14, 2012, <http://www.auditor.leg.state.mn.us/ped/2011/k12oll.htm>

²²⁰ Letter to BlueSky Online School sent March 2011; retrieved August 19, 2012, <http://kstp.com/kstpImages/repository/cs/files/LetterBlueSky.pdf>

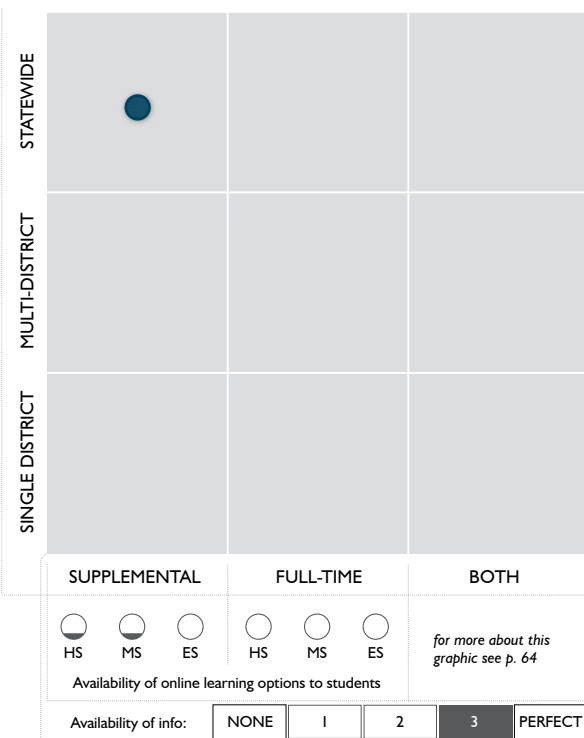
²²¹ Letter to Novation Opportunities sent March 2011; retrieved August 19, 2012, <http://kstp.com/kstpImages/repository/cs/files/EducationOpportunities.pdf>

²²² BlueSky Online School press release; retrieved August 19, 2012, http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/bluesky-online-school-returns-focus-to-innovative-education-after-education-commissioner-dismisses-contract-termination-action-139860923.html?utm_expId=43414375-18

²²³ Minnesota Learning Commons; retrieved July 14, 2012, <http://mnlearningcommons.org>

MISSISSIPPI

STATE SNAPSHOT 2012



State virtual school

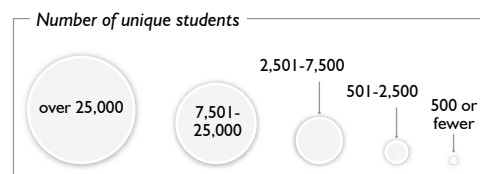
Mississippi Virtual Public School served 3,382 course enrollments in 2011-12.

Other statewide programs

Some district-run online programs.

Full-time options

None.



The Mississippi Virtual Public School (MVPS), established by legislation in 2006,²²⁴ is the only major online program in the state. MVPS funding dropped from \$1.8 million in 2009-10 to \$600,000 in 2010-11 and to \$500,000 in 2011-12. MVPS reported 3,382 course enrollments in SY 2011-12, a 3% decrease from 2010-11.²²⁵ MVPS serves students in grades 9-12, giving preference to juniors and seniors. All students are required to gain approval from their local school district. Private and homeschooled students must meet the same requirement and use the local public school for which they are zoned. HB1056 (2010) authorized the “State Board of Education to select private providers ... to administer, manage, or operate virtual school programs, including operation of the Mississippi Virtual Public School Program.” The Department of Education (MDE) selected Connections Education to run MVPS. The State Board of Education established policy for virtual schools in 2006 and retains approval authority for all MVPS coursework and policy, as well as any other programs in the state. It also established a set of guiding principles for virtual schools administered by the MDE.²²⁶

The current charter school law, the New Start School Program and Conversion Charter School Act,²²⁷ allows parents of students of a school that has been failing for three consecutive years to request that the state board turn it into a charter. The Center for Education Reform calls Mississippi’s charter law the worst in the country.²²⁸ As of August 2012, there are no charter schools—virtual or brick and mortar—in Mississippi.

²²⁴ Mississippi Code 37-161-3 / HB1056; retrieved June 13, 2012, <http://billstatus.ls.state.ms.us/2010/pdf/history/HB/HB1056.xml>

²²⁵ Personal communication with Mississippi Department of Education, July 2, 2012

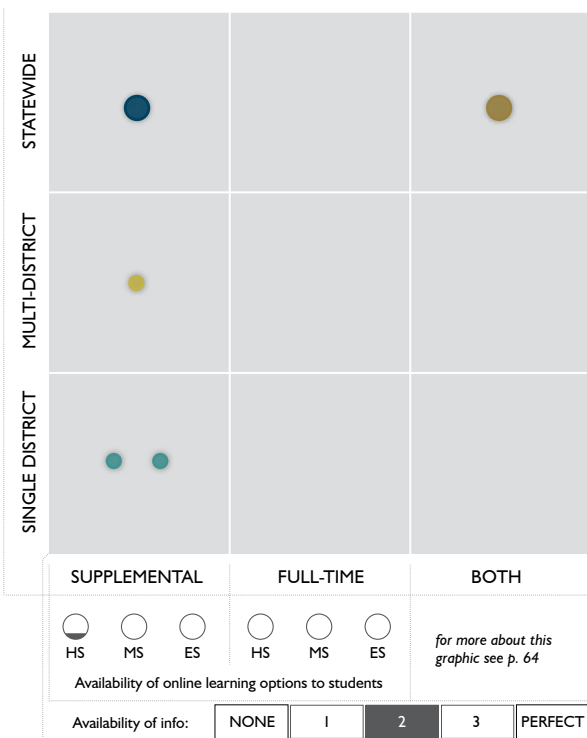
²²⁶ State Board Policy 5400; retrieved August 8, 2012, <http://www.mde.k12.ms.us/docs/policy-manual/5400.htm?sfvrsn=2>

²²⁷ SB2293 (2010); retrieved June 13, 2012, <http://billstatus.ls.state.ms.us/2010/pdf/history/SB/SB2293.xml>

²²⁸ The Center for Education Reform; retrieved August 6, 2012, <http://www.edreform.com/map/#ms>

MISSOURI

STATE SNAPSHOT 2012



State virtual school

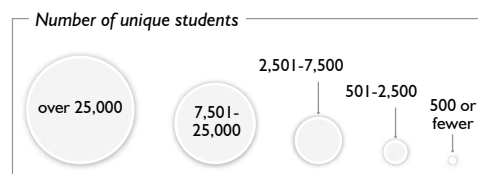
Missouri Virtual Instruction Program (MoVIP) served 1,562 course enrollments in SY 2011-12, a 90% drop since 2008-09.

Postsecondary

MU High School served 777 full-time students in 2011-12.

Districts

Some districts offer online programs; MoVIP also allows districts to purchase content and courses.



Missouri has a very small state virtual school with the Missouri Virtual Instruction Program (MoVIP), no statewide online charter schools, and a few district programs. There has been an overall decline in online learning options and enrollment in existing options due to significant statewide budget cuts in the middle of SY 2009-10. MoVIP and the University of Missouri-Columbia High School (MU High School) continue to operate, although in the case of MoVIP, with reduced enrollments. The Missouri Virtual School and St. Louis Public Schools Virtual School closed at the end of SY 2009-10. The Cooperating School Districts of Greater St. Louis are working with member districts to identify online course options through the District-Choice Online Learning Program.

Missouri passed legislation in 2012 that expands charter schools while requiring more oversight, but the legislation does not address virtual charters. Though the Missouri state legislature has considered legislation each of the past two years that would allow students to enroll in virtual courses or programs outside of their district, the legislation has not passed, and as of 2012 the only public virtual school option is a limited number of seats with MoVIP.²²⁹

Online programs

MoVIP is the state virtual school created by SB912²³⁰ and HB1275²³¹ in 2006; it serves part- and full-time students in grades K-12, although the majority of its enrollments are in high school. It does not offer courses directly, rather it contracts with external vendors. MoVIP began the

²²⁹ SB329 (2011); http://www.senate.mo.gov/11info/bts_web/Bill.aspx?SessionType=r&BillID=4177409; HB 463 (2011); <http://house.mo.gov/bills/billsummary.aspx?bill=HB463&year=2011>; SB735 (2012); http://www.senate.mo.gov/12info/BTS_Web/Bill.aspx?SessionType=R&BillID=984768; and HB1629 (2012); <http://www.house.mo.gov/BillSummaryPrn.aspx?bill=HB1629&year=2012&code=R&style=new> all retrieved August 7, 2012

²³⁰ SB912 (2006); retrieved August 7, 2012, <http://www.senate.mo.gov/06info/pdf-bill/tat/SB912.pdf>

²³¹ HB1275 (2006); retrieved August 7, 2012, <http://www.house.mo.gov/content.aspx?info=/bills061/bilsum/perf/sHB1275P.htm>

2009-10 school year with a \$4.8 million appropriation; however, funding was severely cut mid-year, resulting in an immediate drop in enrollments. MoVIP served 1,562 course enrollments in SY 2011-12, a 17% increase from the previous year but a 90% decrease from 2008-09. Funding for SY 2012-13 is \$390,000. All 115 counties in Missouri have students participating in MoVIP, which offers 199 semester-length courses. Most students pay tuition, although students have four funding options for attending MoVIP:

- Students and their families pay tuition directly to the vendor; that amount varies.
- Medically fragile students may qualify for free tuition.
- If a student enrolls in a MoVIP class and the district chooses to pay for it, the enrolling district can be reimbursed for 90% of its state funding for that class. The school district has the choice as to whether to allow the student to take the course, except in the instance outlined below.
- SB64 (2007) states that “a parent residing in a lapsed, or poor performing school district [one with provisional or uncertified status for two years or more] may enroll their child in the Missouri virtual school if the child first enrolls in the school district of residence. The school district shall include the child’s enrollment in the virtual school in determining the district’s average daily attendance. The board of the home district shall pay to the virtual school the amount required under current law to be paid for other students enrolled in the virtual school.”²³² Districts that are not accredited also are required to pay for student tuition.

MoVIP started a program in 2010-11 that allows districts to offer MoVIP courses using their own teachers. The district has full access to the learning management system and course content; it simply pays the vendor for the course.

MU High School is part of the University of Missouri’s College of Education. It provides asynchronous distance learning courses for a fee, typically paid for by students and their families. It reported 777 full-time high school students, an 11% increase. It served an additional estimated 800 supplemental course enrollments, 421 of which were in the elementary and middle school grades.²³³

State policies

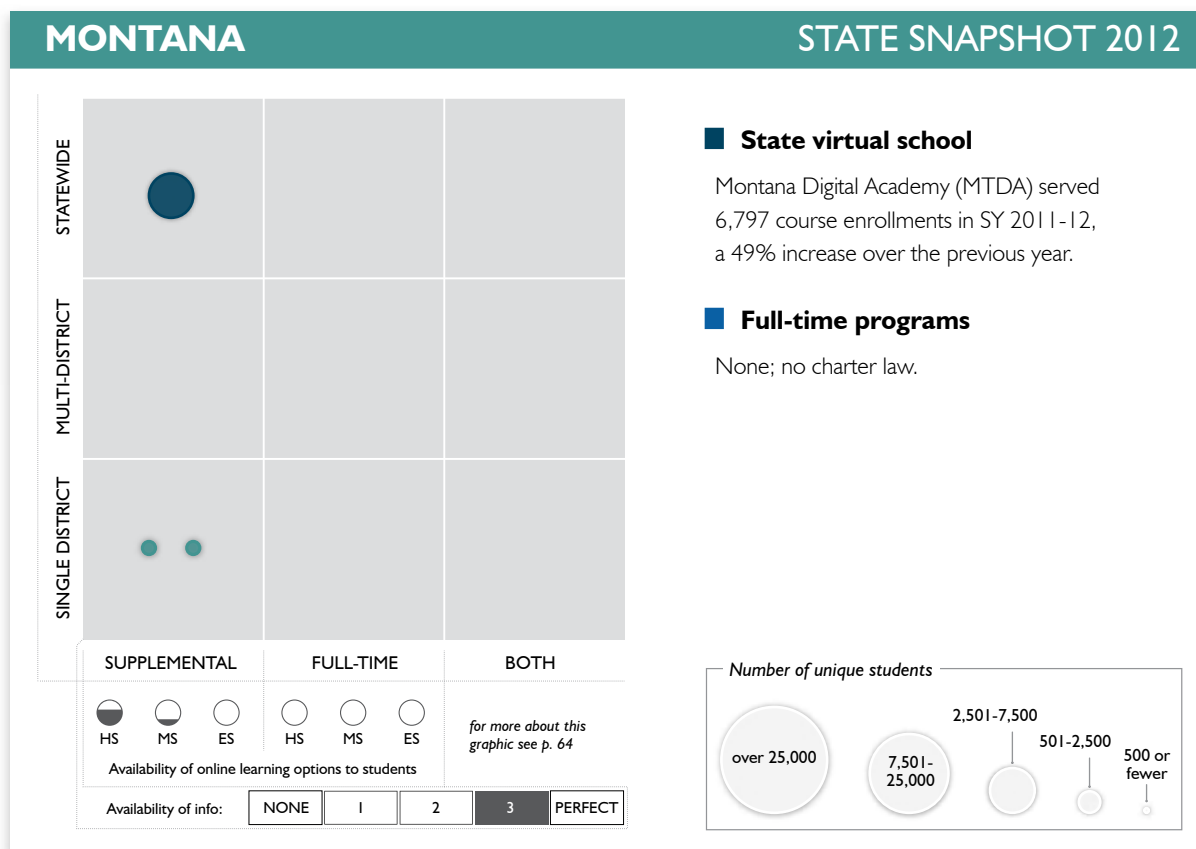
SB291 (2009) eliminated seat-time requirements for virtual education classes offered by Missouri school districts and allowed districts to collect state funds. It stated “for purposes of calculation and distribution of funding, attendance of a student enrolled in a district virtual class will equal, upon course completion, ninety-four percent of the hours of attendance for such class delivered in the non-virtual program.”²³⁴

Charter schools receive state funding when providing virtual courses to students. School districts and charter schools must ensure that courses from outside vendors are aligned with state curriculum standards and comply with state requirements for teacher certification.

²³² SB64 (2007); retrieved August 7, 2012, http://www.senate.mo.gov/07info/BTS_Web/Bill.aspx?SessionType=r&BillID=136

²³³ Personal communication, MU High School; August 8, 2012

²³⁴ SB291 (2009), Missouri Revised Statutes 162.1250; retrieved August 28, 2012, http://www.senate.mo.gov/09info/BTS_Web/Bill.aspx?SessionType=R&BillID=683252



The Montana Digital Academy (MTDA), the state virtual school, opened in fall 2010 and is the only statewide online program. Montana does not have any statewide full-time online schools. There are some small district online programs that are limited to serving students in their own districts.

MTDA is hosted by the University of Montana's College of Education and Human Sciences. Course enrollments for SY 2011-12 reached 6,797, a 49% increase over the previous year.²³⁵ In 2011, the governor and legislature approved HB2, which provided a \$2.33 million appropriation for MTDA split equally in 2011-12 and 2012-13.²³⁶ This funding allows MTDA to continue to provide online courses at no cost to public school districts and students. Based on its current growth rate, MTDA is projecting a budget shortfall of about \$475,000 in SY 2012-13. No limitation on enrollments for fall 2012 was planned. MTDA is seeking funding to support expected growth and may have to limit enrollments or charge tuition during spring 2013 if adequate funding is not secured.

MTDA classes are taught exclusively by Montana teachers employed by their local districts and trained in online instructional techniques by MTDA. MTDA, through an interlocal agreement with the local school district, provides the compensation for the teacher through the local district and reimburses each district for associated employment costs. MTDA teachers are generally assigned only one course section per semester to avoid conflict with teaching loads in their local districts. MTDA offers both original credit and credit recovery courses; small districts tend to enroll students in original credit classes, and larger districts tend to enroll a higher percentage of students in credit recovery courses. Credit recovery courses now account for about 48% of MTDA course enrollments. MTDA launched a middle school curriculum in 2011, beginning with a world language survey course.

²³⁵ MTDA opened in fall 2010, so the time periods for the two comparison years are slightly different, because MTDA did not have summer 2010 enrollments.

²³⁶ HB0002 (2011); retrieved June 1, 2012, <http://data.opi.mt.gov/bills/2011/billpdf/HB0002.enr2.pdf>

There is no law in Montana that authorizes charter schools. Although there is an administrative rule that provides for something called “charter schools,” Montana has never had any charter schools. Great Falls Public Schools operates the largest district online program in Montana. It uses originally developed courses, supplemented by MTDA courses. The Kalispell Schools Bridge Academy, an alternative school, uses MTDA content in a blended learning environment with district teachers and academic support.

State policies

Providers of individual courses delivered remotely to school districts must register annually with the state.²³⁷ Providers must identify all Montana school districts to which they are delivering distance learning; verify the professional qualifications of course teachers; provide course descriptions, including content and delivery model, for each program and/or course; and demonstrate that students have ongoing contact with distance learning teachers. Despite these reporting requirements, there are no available documents that report online course enrollments at the district level. The OPI also publishes a set of online course guidelines, although there is no formal process for evaluating online course quality.²³⁸

School districts can only serve students who are residents of the district, preventing districts from offering online statewide programs.²³⁹

State policies did not change in 2011. Additional information on state policies and the history of distance and online learning activity in Montana is available at www.kpk12.com/states/.

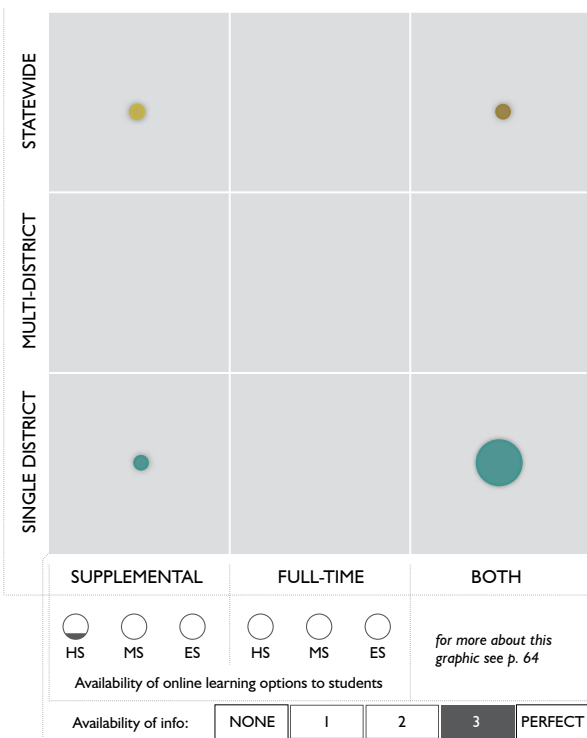
²³⁷ Montana OPI registered distance learning providers; retrieved June 1, 2012, <http://opi.mt.gov/pdf/Accred/09DLProviders.pdf>

²³⁸ Administrative Rules of Montana, Section 907 Distance, Online, and Technology Delivered Learning; retrieved June 1, 2012, <http://sos.mt.gov/arm/register/archives/MAR2004/MAR04-07.pdf>, and Checklist for Evaluating Online Courses; retrieved June 1, 2012, http://opi.mt.gov/pdf/advplacement/OLC_Checklist.pdf

²³⁹ Montana Code 20-7-118; retrieved September 26, 2012, <http://data.opi.mt.gov/bills/mca/20/7/20-7-118.htm>

NEBRASKA

STATE SNAPSHOT 2012



State-led initiative

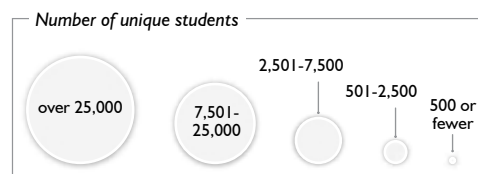
Nebraska Virtual Partnership initiative coordinates a statewide clearinghouse of over 515 courses known as the Nebraska Virtual Instruction Source (NVIS).

Postsecondary

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln Independent Study High School has between 300-500 enrollments annually and works with many Nebraska schools to provide needed courses and credit recovery.

Districts

OPS eLearning (Omaha) had over 13,000 course enrollments for SY 2011-12.



Nebraska has the Nebraska Virtual Initiative which served 10,617 enrollments in SY 2011-12; a large district online and a blended learning program in Omaha; and school-based online programs and courses provided by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, some of which are paid by districts (others are private pay). There are no full-time online schools. Nebraska piloted a state virtual school in 2011-12 that served 75 students, but it was no longer running as of August 2012.

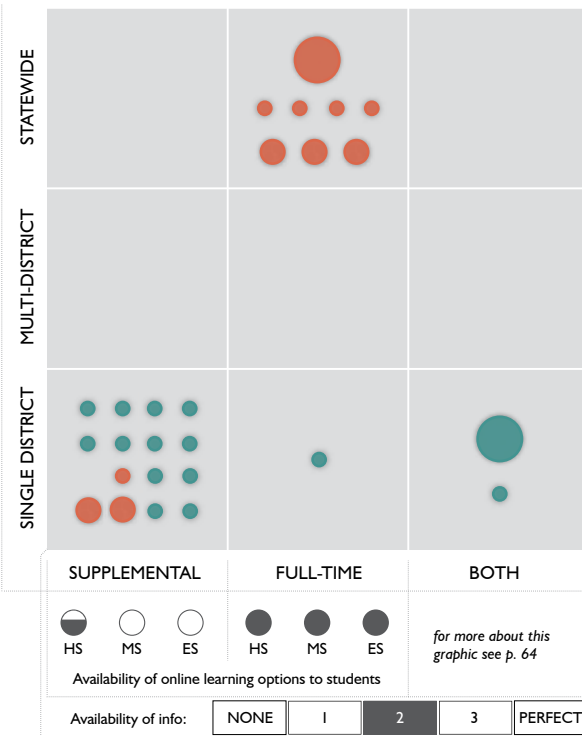
After the state virtual school pilot ended due to lack of state funding, the Nebraska Virtual Partnership agreed that the K-12 and higher education systems, the Education Service Unit Coordinating Council, the Department of Education, and Nebraska Educational Television should collaborate to carry out the Nebraska Virtual Initiative by sharing resources and co-developing infrastructure. The courses offered via Network Nebraska, which was formed in 2006, are a combination of online classes mostly offered by the UNL-Independent Study High School and a large number of hybrid courses shared between districts through a blended learning approach. Schools use either Angel or Moodle as their LMS and provide instruction through a combination of online delivery and synchronous instruction over high-definition videoconferencing.

Omaha Public Schools (OPS) eLearning, which initially was designed to meet the needs of credit recovery students in grades 9-12, has evolved into a blended learning program for all students. OPS eLearning had over 13,000 course enrollments in 2011-12, about the same as 2010-11. It offers 82 different courses. Some districts participate in myelearning.org, which provides access to online resources and tools.

State policies created between 2006 and 2009 influenced distance learning across the state and are detailed at www.kpk12.com/states/.

NEVADA

STATE SNAPSHOT 2012



Full-time options

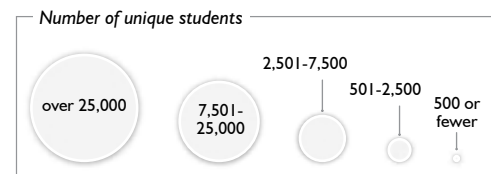
Eleven fully online charters enrolled 8,735 students in SY 2011-12; some district programs also offer full-time programs.

Districts

Nevada Department of Education approves all online programs; 15 districts have been approved; Clark County served over 10,000 course enrollments and 150 full-time students in 2011-12.

Policy

AB233 (2011) revises provisions governing the circumstances under which a pupil may receive credit for a course of study.



Nevada has 11 online charter schools (seven of which are fully online) and 15 district online programs approved by the Nevada Department of Education (NDE) as of September 2012. The state is unique in that 72% of its students are in one district, the Clark County School District.²⁴⁰ The state has policies governing distance education, which includes video and online delivery; those policies apply to both district programs and charter schools. In 2011, the State Board of Education adopted alternatives to seat-time policies that restricted students in the past.

Online programs

The seven virtual charter schools and two virtual district programs served a combined 8,735 full-time students in SY 2011-12, a 19% increase (see Table 9). Clark County School District Virtual High School (a district program) launched in fall 2004, and serves students statewide. It served 10,000 course enrollments in 2011-12, an increase of 58%, as well as 149 full-time students. There were over 4,800 online enrollments in summer 2011, an increase of 140%. WOLF program in Reno, powered by Advanced Academics, is the only school in the Washoe County district to receive exemplary status in NCLB accountability ratings in 2011 and 2012; it served more than 1,000 unique students in 2011-12, 128 of whom were full-time.

²⁴⁰ National Center for Education Statistics; retrieved September 11, 2012, <http://nces.ed.gov/ccd/districtsearch/>

	School Type	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Beacon Academy	Charter	-	-	605	680	639	651
Delta Academy (Clark County)	Charter	-	54	125	214	196	181
I Can Do Anything (ICDA; Washoe County)	Charter	354	350	371	359	296	326
Nevada Connections Academy	Charter	402	420	922	1,348	1,571	1,719
Nevada Virtual Academy	Charter	402	1,063	726	1,873	2,602	3,573
Odyssey Charters	Charter	1,409	1,414	1,430	1,324	1,348	1,577
Silver State Charter School	Charter	254	328	424	458	470	431
CHARTER TOTAL		2,821	3,629	4,603	6,256	7,122	8,458
Clark County Virtual High School	District	138	114	146	140	149	149
WOLF (Washoe Online Learning for the Future)	District	n/a	n/a	n/a	208	149	128
FULL-TIME VIRTUAL TOTAL		2,959	3,743	4,749	6,604	7,420	8,735

Table 9: Nevada full-time virtual student enrollment information for programs reporting that information. All other single district programs do not report enrollment numbers for a separate virtual school.

The virtual charters served 8,458 full-time students in SY 2011-12, a 19% increase over the previous year. Silver State Charter Schools also serves students statewide in grades 7-12, although students must attend synchronous courses in a cohort and are required to meet with a teacher at the school once a week.²⁴¹ Odyssey Charter School serves grades K-12 and has a face-to-face component.

State policies

Nevada online education policies set forth programmatic and reporting requirements, have the state maintain a list of courses and providers that meet certain requirements, allow the state to review or audit distance programs, and allow the state to revoke its approval of a distance education program that does not meet requirements. These requirements apply to district programs and charter schools. Unless otherwise noted, the following information comes from Nevada Revised Statutes,²⁴² with quotes from the NDE web page on distance learning.²⁴³

- Except for charter schools, students must get permission from their own school district before taking part in another district's online program. If the student is taking online courses as part of the school day, the two districts agree to the apportionment of funds.
- Virtual charter schools must inform the district that the student is enrolling in the charter school before that student begins classes. Funding follows the student from the district in which the student resides to the charter school. It is the same for their virtual students as for brick-and-mortar counterparts.

²⁴¹ Online school enrollment data; retrieved September 23, 2012, <http://www.nevadareportcard.com/>

²⁴² Nevada Revised Statutes 388; retrieved August 9, 2012, <http://www.leg.state.nv.us/nrs/NRS-388.html>

²⁴³ Nevada Department of Education; retrieved August 9, 2012, http://www.doe.nv.gov/Tech_DistanceEd.htm

The State Board of Education has identified alternatives to seat-time requirements that restricted online learning in the past. Previously, all courses approved by the NDE had to meet the requirement that, “If a program of distance education is provided for pupils on a full-time basis, the program must include at least as many hours or minutes of instruction as would be provided under a program consisting of 180 days.” The board adopted 387.193 at its October 2011 meeting²⁴⁴ that changed the attendance requirements of distance programs, providing alternatives so students do not have to report to a physical classroom once a week. The regulations now state that a pupil shall be deemed enrolled if the course is an approved course and the student’s name is recorded in the system of record. Student attendance will be recorded for each week that “Evidence of work progression by the pupil in each course as documented through the electronic learning management system . . . or the pupil has participated in a real time class session conducted by licensed personnel authorized by the school for the course.”

AB233 (2011) also revised provisions governing the circumstances under which a student may receive credit for a course.²⁴⁵ Under previous law, a pupil was granted credit for a course of study without attending the classes for the course if the pupil passed an examination prescribed by the board and demonstrated competency in the subject area.²⁴⁶ AB233 provided that a pupil may also be granted credit in lieu of course attendance if the pupil: 1) demonstrates proficiency on an examination developed by the principal and the teacher providing instruction in the course; or 2) passes an examination that the principal determines is as or more rigorous than the examination prescribed by the board.

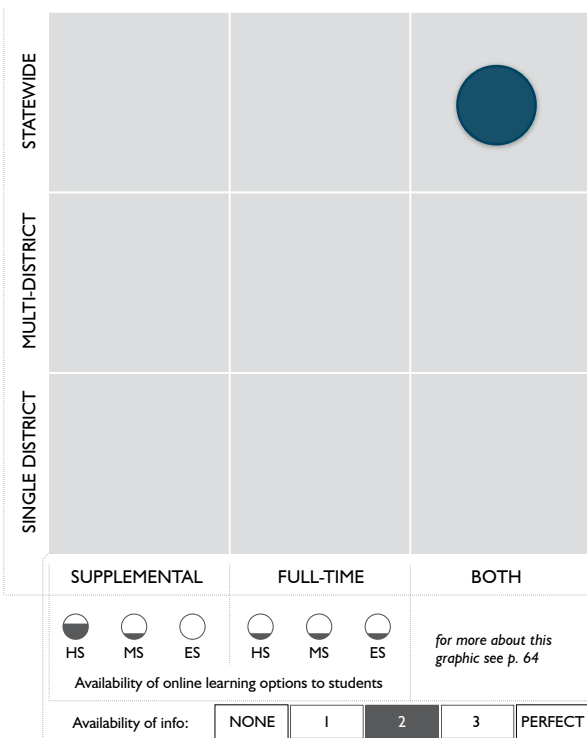
²⁴⁴ State Board of Education October 2011 meeting minutes; retrieved August 10, 2012, http://nde.doe.nv.gov/BoardEd/Meetings/2011/2011-10-07_Minutes_CTE.pdf

²⁴⁵ AB233; retrieved August 9, 2012, <http://www.leg.state.nv.us/76th2011/Reports/history.cfm?ID=519>

²⁴⁶ NRS 389.670 and 389.171; retrieved August 10, 2012, <http://leg.state.nv.us/Statutes/70th/Stats199916.html#Stats199916page2670> and <http://leg.state.nv.us/NRS/NRS-389.html>

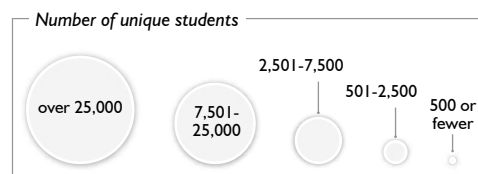
NEW HAMPSHIRE

STATE SNAPSHOT 2012



State virtual school

Virtual Learning Academy Charter School (VLACS) served 7,868 students in 15,558 course enrollments in SY 2011-12.



New Hampshire has a statewide virtual charter school, Virtual Learning Academy Charter School (VLACS), which plays a role similar to that of other state virtual schools in that it provides mostly supplemental courses to students enrolled in physical schools. Most online learning activity in the state is through VLACS. New Hampshire's first statewide online high school, VLACS, was approved in May 2007 to serve grades 6-12. It served about 7,868 individual students accounting for 15,558 course enrollments in SY 2011-12, a 35% increase from the previous year; among those are 100 full-time students. In addition, 457 students from 23 middle and high schools (20% of the schools in the state) took courses through The VHS Collaborative.

There are two sections to New Hampshire charter school law: 1) open enrollment schools, which require a school district vote to authorize the charter school, and 2) a pilot charter program.²⁴⁷ VLACS was established under the pilot program and approved by the State Board of Education. It receives state-funded tuition through New Hampshire's Education Trust Fund, which benefits public schools. Local schools are funded by the same fund plus local property taxes. Currently, all charter schools, including VLACS, receive \$5,450 for each FTE. VLACS receives funding based on course/competency completion percentages.

A dual enrollment program, eStart, is a collaboration between the New Hampshire community college system and VLACS.²⁴⁸ It is offering 10 courses in SY 2012-13. VLACS courses have rolling enrollment (students may start courses anytime between September and February), are self-paced, and must be completed by June 30.

New Hampshire does not have policies that govern online courses specifically, but state rules on distance learning have been in effect since July 2005.²⁴⁹ Most of the rules describe policies local school boards must set for distance learning.

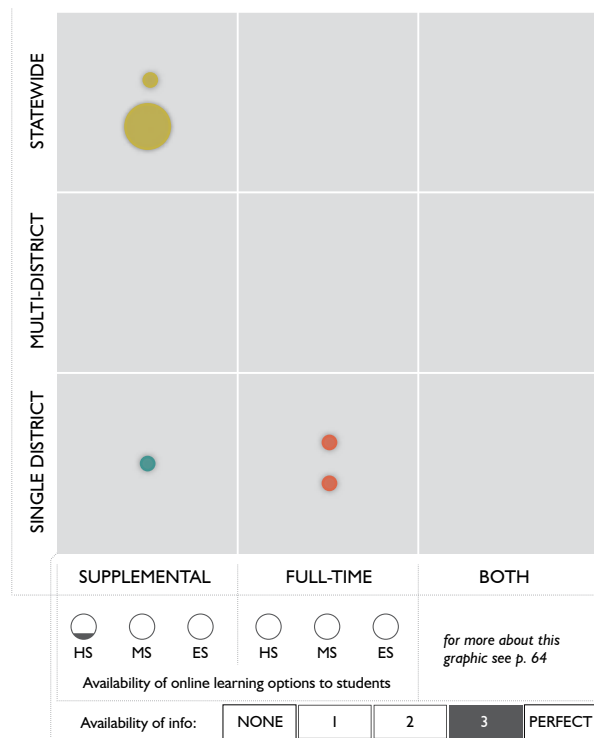
²⁴⁷ Title XV education, Section 194-B:3-a; retrieved July 27, 2012, <http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/rsa/html/XV/194-B/194-B-mrg.htm>

²⁴⁸ eStart; retrieved August 31, 2012, http://vlacs.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=158&Itemid=250

²⁴⁹ Section 306.22; retrieved July 13, 2012, <http://www.education.nh.gov/legislation/documents/ed306.pdf>

NEW JERSEY

STATE SNAPSHOT 2012



Districts

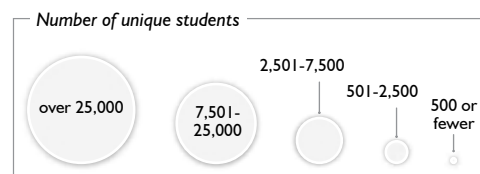
834 students taking supplemental courses from NJeSchool; 1,743 course enrollments in The VHS Collaborative in SY 2011-12.

Full-time options

Two virtual charter school applications are approved for planning years through 2012-13, to open in fall 2013: the New Jersey Virtual Academy Charter School and the New Jersey Virtual Charter School.

Blended

Newark Preparatory Charter School and Merit Preparatory Charter School are both fully blended charters that opened in fall 2012.



New Jersey had no state virtual school, few district programs, and two new blended charters as of fall 2012. The New Jersey Virtual School (NJVS), run by the Monmouth Ocean Educational Services Commission (MOESC), has offered tuition-based supplemental courses to students in grades 6-12 since 2002. In SY 2011-12, NJVS reported serving 4,965 students. NJeSchool, formerly Hudson eSchool, is managed by the Hudson County Schools of Technology; it reported 834 students taking supplemental courses in SY 2011-12. Forty-three schools (11% of middle and high schools) are members of The VHS Collaborative, serving a total of 1,743 course enrollments, a 28% increase from SY 2010-11.

In 2011, two virtual charter school applicants were approved for a planning year: the New Jersey Virtual Charter School (NJVCS) and the New Jersey Virtual Academy Charter School (NJVACS). The applications were submitted under the New Jersey charter school law enacted in 1995. It required applications “be submitted to the commissioner and the local board of education or state superintendent ... in the school year proceeding the school year in which the charter school will be established.”²⁵⁰ Approval for a planning year does not guarantee final authorization or that the school will go into operation. The planning year is designed to give school leadership “additional time to develop the academic and operational components of the school.”²⁵¹ The schools must pass “an additional ‘preparedness review’ to show that they have ... met all regulatory requirements to open.” NJVCS asked for and received approval for additional planning years and will go through the normal approval process, with the intention of opening in 2013. NJVACS did not successfully

²⁵⁰ New Jersey Department of Education (NJ DOE) and the Charter School Program Act of 1995; retrieved August 24, 2012, <http://www.state.nj.us/education/chartsch/cspa95.htm>

²⁵¹ NJ DOE press release; retrieved July 2, 2012, <http://www.state.nj.us/education/news/2011/0715chart.htm>

meet preparedness needs and was granted a subsequent planning year and will undergo review for 2013.²⁵²

The NJVCS application was made by MOESC, which currently operates the fee-based New Jersey Virtual School. The NJVCS plans to serve 150 students in grades 10-12 from Camden, Paterson, Perth Amboy, Middlesex, Monmouth, and Neptune counties in partnership with Rutgers University and area community colleges. The second virtual charter, the NJVACS, plans to open with about 850 students in grades K-10, with curriculum developed by K12 Inc. It primarily will serve students in Newark.

Both virtual charters plan to enroll students throughout the state, with preference given to those students listed in the districts of residence identified in the charter applications. Virtual charters will face the same level of oversight as all other charters in the state.

Two blended learning charters opened in Newark in fall 2012. Newark Preparatory Charter is using K12 Inc. curriculum in a blended environment for 9th grade students in its first year. Merit Preparatory Charter, operated by Touchstone Education, is serving 6th grade students in its first year.

The New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) revised its Core Curriculum Content Standards for 2009 to reflect strong integration of technology in all core content areas,²⁵³ and the state adopted the Common Core State Standards in 2010. New Jersey is a member of the Partnership for 21st Century Skills initiative and is committed to increasing student achievement using 21st century technologies.

The NJDOE approves supplemental education services (SES) providers, which may include online learning options for students.²⁵⁴ The SES office monitors those who apply to provide SES, but it does not review online schools.

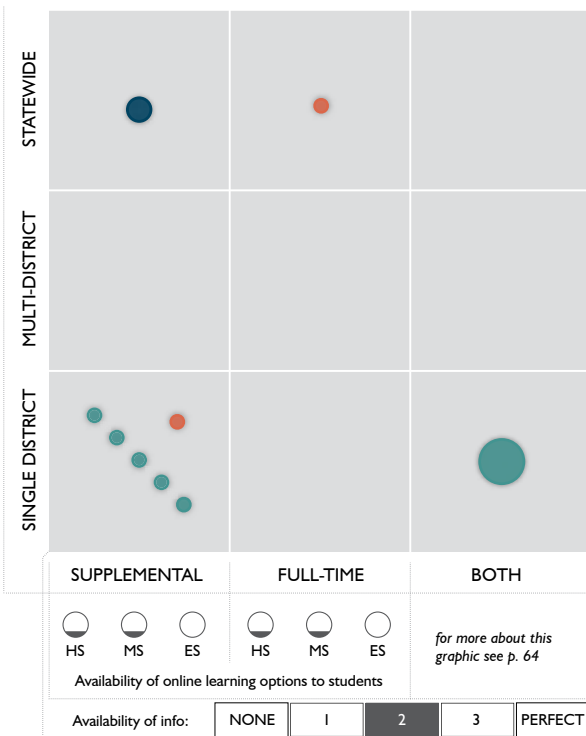
²⁵² Commissioner of Education's Final Decision, July 16, 2012; retrieved August 29, 2012, <http://www.state.nj.us/education/news/2012/0716chart.htm>

²⁵³ Core Curriculum Content Standards; retrieved July 2, 2012, <http://www.state.nj.us/education/cccs/>

²⁵⁴ Approved SES list for 2011-12; retrieved August 15, 2012, <http://education.state.nj.us/ses/2011/>

NEW MEXICO

STATE SNAPSHOT 2012

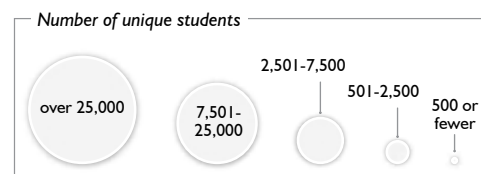


■ Full-time options

New Mexico Virtual Academy opened in SY 2012-13 and is the first full-time online school in the state.

■ State virtual school

IDEAL-NM (Innovative Digital Education and Learning New Mexico) served 2,802 course enrollments in SY 2011-12.



New Mexico has a state virtual school, IDEAL-NM (Innovative Digital Education and Learning New Mexico), a few district programs, and one full-time virtual charter school that opened in fall 2012. Albuquerque Public Schools' eCADEMY is the state's largest district program with about 3,800 unique students in SY 2011-12, including both supplemental and some full-time enrollments. Distance learning rules approved in 2008²⁵⁵ set requirements for IDEAL-NM; the rules also allow public schools (including charters) to provide online learning courses to students in any district as long as there are written agreements in place between host and resident districts. The local school where the student is enrolled approves and registers students for online courses and pays course fees. State rules²⁵⁶ allow for creation of full-time, multi-district online schools, but states that asynchronous distance learning, "shall not be used as a substitute for all direct, face-to-face student and teacher interactions unless approved by the local board of education."

Charter schools in New Mexico can be authorized either by the Charter School Division of the Public Education Department (PED) or district boards of education. In 2012, the first statewide virtual charter school, New Mexico Virtual Academy (NMVA), was authorized by Farmington Municipal Schools for SY 2012-13. NMVA serves students in grades 6–12 with curriculum and services supplied by K12 Inc. Farmington established an annual cap of 500 students for the virtual school's first five years of which it reached in August 2012; it maintains a waiting list.²⁵⁷ NMVA is meeting most of the provisions of the distance learning rule²⁵⁸ and offers several face-to-face components: a learning center in Farmington and satellite locations across the state; face-to-face activities between teachers physically located throughout the state and local students; and synchronous, interactive online class sessions. As of August 2012, the requirement that schools meet the provision of the distance learning rule that written agreements be in place between host and resident districts had not been clarified by the PED. In September 2012, the Public Education

²⁵⁵ SB209 Bill Analysis; retrieved June 28, 2012, <http://www.nmlegis.gov/Sessions/07%20Regular/LESCAnalysis/senate/SB209%20%20Cyber%20Academy%20Act.pdf>

²⁵⁶ Title 6, Chapter 30, Part 8 analysis; retrieved June 28, 2012, <http://www.nmcpr.state.nm.us/nmac/parts/title06/06.030.0008.htm>

²⁵⁷ Enrollment caps are negotiated between the virtual charter board and the authorizer, and are not set by law or regulation.

²⁵⁸ Title 6, Chapter 30, Part 8; retrieved June 28, 2012, <http://www.nmcpr.state.nm.us/nmac/parts/title06/06.030.0008.htm>

Commission denied the opening of a new statewide virtual charter due to confusion about whether it is legally able to authorize virtual charters.

SB427 (2011) provided students in failing schools the option to choose online alternatives, with funding for those courses coming from the underperforming districts. “The parent of a student enrolled in a public school rated F for two of the last four years has the right to transfer the student in the same grade to any public school in the state not rated F or the right to have the student continue schooling by means of distance learning offered through the statewide or a local cyber academy. The school district or charter school in which the student is enrolled is responsible for the cost of distance learning.”²⁵⁹ The law defined criteria for rating schools including adequate yearly progress (AYP), student growth and graduation rates. Ratings were to be developed and published by the PED beginning with SY 2011-12, but debate over the criteria used to identify failing schools has delayed implementation. As of August 2012 there is no timetable for implementing the requirements. Although AYP is only one criterion for the school rating, 718 of the state’s 831 schools (86.4%) did not meet AYP in 2011,²⁶⁰ and 77% failed to meet AYP the previous year, indicating that a large percentage of New Mexico students would have a choice in their public school. However, online choices for students in grades K-5 will remain limited even for those in failing schools because IDEAL-NM and district online programs offer online courses only for grades 6-12.

In 2009-10 several provisions of the 2007 High School Redesign bill (SB0561)²⁶¹ came into effect, including a requirement that at least one of the 24 units required for graduation must be an Advanced Placement, honors, dual enrollment, or a distance learning course.

Online programs

IDEAL-NM was created by the 2007 Statewide Cyber Academy Act (SB209). IDEAL-NM had 2,802 course enrollments in SY 2011-12, a 27% decrease from SY 2010-11. A significant percentage of IDEAL-NM’s 2010-11 total course enrollment (36%, 1,360 enrollments) was from the Graduate New Mexico initiative, established in 2009 to address the nearly 50% dropout rate in the state. Graduate New Mexico was eliminated in 2011, contributing to the decrease in IDEAL-NM course enrollments.²⁶²

IDEAL-NM is entering its fifth year of providing a statewide learning management system (LMS) through which online K-12 and state agency training courses are delivered. As of August 2012, 51 of New Mexico’s 89 school districts (57%) and 19 charter schools operate independent domains within the LMS to create branded web portals to access all of the courses offered by IDEAL-NM at no cost, as well as shared community resources and professional development services. Districts can also create content for their own blended and/or online programs in the LMS. In addition, a statewide eLearning Service Center supports the LMS for all the education and training entities.²⁶³ IDEAL-NM also provides an eLearning portal that acts as a clearinghouse for online courses and programs offered by New Mexico higher education institutions, K-12, and state agencies.

School districts offering online programs include Albuquerque, Rio Rancho, Hobbs, Taos, and Roy, as well as the Gilbert L. Sena Charter High School. Albuquerque Public Schools’ eCADEMY is an alternative school with a comprehensive blended learning program serving K-12 students using IDEAL-NM, the National Repository for Online Courses (NROC), and self-developed content.²⁶⁴ eCADEMY served about 3,800 unique students in SY 2011-12 including some full-time enrollments.

²⁵⁹ SB427; retrieved July 23, 2012, <http://www.nmlegis.gov/Sessions/11%20Regular/final/SB0427.pdf>

²⁶⁰ NM State Department of Education; retrieved July 23, 2012, <http://www.ped.state.nm.us/ayp2011/appeals/Quick%20Facts%202011%20Post%20Appeals.pdf>

²⁶¹ SB0561; retrieved July 23, 2012, <http://www.nmlegis.gov/Sessions/07%20Regular/final/SB0561.pdf>

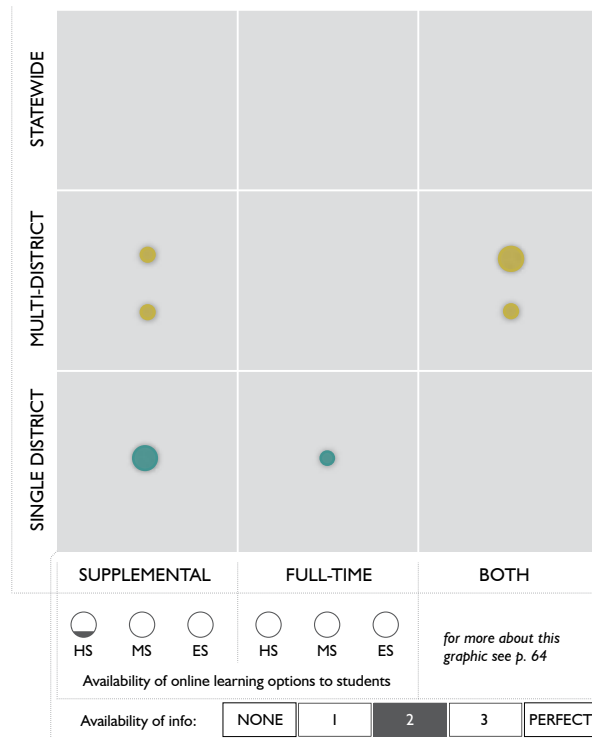
²⁶² If the Graduate New Mexico enrollments in 2010-11 are excluded, IDEAL-NM had a 14% annual increase in course enrollments in SY 2011-12.

²⁶³ IDEAL-NM; retrieved July 23, 2012, http://www.ideal-nm.org/home/get-content/content/about_ideal-nm

²⁶⁴ The Rise of K-12 Blended Learning, Heather Staker and Michael B. Horn, Innosight Institute and Charter School Growth Fund, pp 60-63; retrieved July 23, 2012, <http://www.innosightinstitute.org/media-room/publications/education-publications/the-rise-of-k-12-blended-learning/>

NEW YORK

STATE SNAPSHOT 2012



Full-time options

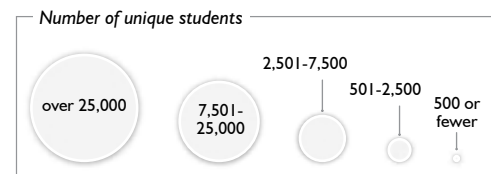
No; past charter denials block online charters, and there are no fully online statewide schools.

Districts

iLearnNYC is a New York City online and blended district-wide initiative; several BOCES programs; 460 students at 40 middle and high schools took courses through The VHS Collaborative in SY 2011-12.

Policy

The Board of Regents eased seat-time and face-to-face interaction requirements at its June 2011 meeting.



New York has relatively little online learning activity, with some activity happening in districts—including New York City—and Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) throughout the state, but no fully online statewide schools, nor a state virtual school. The state is addressing its lack of state-level online learning policy and initiatives through discussions with the Board of Regents and the New York State Education Department (NYSED), as well as with memos that clarify existing legislation. In June 2011, the Board of Regents modified state diploma requirements to prescribe requirements for earning credit for online and blended coursework.²⁶⁵ At the same meeting, it approved new rules easing seat-time requirements that spell out face-to-face and virtual interactions between students and teachers if a student is to earn credit. The regulations also allow flexibility in the requirements for face-to-face interactions between students and teachers. In addition, the commissioner of education has expanded online offerings for credit recovery (CR100.5(d)(8))²⁶⁶ and independent study (CR100.5(d)(9)).²⁶⁷ Students may now use online courses that include “regular and substantive interaction with the teacher” to make up failed credits. Students also are now eligible to earn three elective credits by completing independent study and showing mastery of content.

²⁶⁵ New York State Education Department Diploma Requirements; Online and Blended Learning, Commissioner’s Regulations section 100.5(d)(10); <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/part100/pages/1005.html#Credit> and June 2011 meeting approval; <http://www.regents.nysed.gov/meetings/2011Meetings/July2011/711bra2.pdf>; both retrieved August 7, 2012

²⁶⁶ Commissioner’s Regulations section 100.5 (d)(8); retrieved on August 7, 2012, <http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/part100/pages/1005.html#makeupcredit>

²⁶⁷ Commissioner’s Regulations section 100.5 (d)(9); retrieved on August 7, 2012, <http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/part100/pages/1005.html#d9>

Online programs

iLearnNYC is the online and blended learning program run by the New York City Department of Education. The initiative has expanded from 40 schools in SY 2009-10 to 204 schools in SY 2012-13; in addition, 24,916 students participated in virtual learning programs offering a mix of online and face-to-face settings in SY 2011-12. In subsequent years, online course offerings will expand, and the department intends to make blended learning a key component of its education infrastructure across the city's schools. iLearnNYC is part of the New York City iZone, a community of schools using innovative approaches to improve outcomes. Initial funding for iZone came from the Race to the Top (RTTT) competition. In 2011-12, 160 schools across all five boroughs participated in the iZone community.

In addition to district-level efforts in New York City, several small-scale efforts are happening in school districts and BOCES around the state. If an online provider has been approved by NYSED, funding can be delivered by any district or BOCES in the state under a cooperative service agreement (CoSER). The Greater Southern Tier (GST) BOCES offers a virtual learning initiative that had 1,100 students complete courses in SY 2011-12; it offers online and blended credit recovery, Regents Review, electives, and Advanced Placement courses.²⁶⁸ Wayne-Finger Lakes BOCES has created Project Accelerate and AccelerateU, which provide online courses for students, as well as professional development and instructional support for teachers. Through an agreement with other BOCES, online courses are available to students and teachers from other regions. Courses are now funded by an enrollment fee paid by districts or students. Districts that meet certain state requirements receive aid from the state in the following fiscal year, ranging from 50 to 75% of the amount paid. iNACOL profiled programs around the state in its report, *"A Snapshot of K-12 Online and Blended Learning Programs in New York,"* released in December 2010.²⁶⁹

NYSED issued an RFP for a Virtual Advanced Placement® (AP®) program that is scheduled to be awarded in November 2012. An estimated \$17 million²⁷⁰ will be awarded to school districts and BOCES to "develop the capacity of local school districts and other eligible applicant entities to provide virtual learning (online and blended) AP coursework to eligible students."

State policies

NYSED released a comprehensive state educational technology plan,²⁷¹ approved in February 2010, which includes a provision for opening a statewide virtual high school.²⁷² The Board of Regents discussed a possible framework for an online high school (November 2009 and February 2010),²⁷³ though discussions have stalled.

New York State amended its charter school legislation in 2007 and most recently by Chapters 101, 102, and 221 of the Laws of 2010. The Board of Regents declined to authorize full-time online charter schools because they interpreted the language in the statute as prohibiting multiple sites (locations) for one charter to apply to online charter schools. This interpretation still stands. The amended charter school legislation lifted the cap on charter schools to 460 (from 200), specified a new charter school approval process, prohibited new schools from contracting a majority of their operations or services with for-profit management companies, and mandated an annual report from each charter school.

²⁶⁸ Personal communication with GST BOCES, August 29, 2012

²⁶⁹ *A Snapshot of K-12 Online and Blended Learning Programs in New York*; retrieved August 13, 2012, <http://k12blueprint.com/k12/blueprint/cd/NYSnapshotDec2010.pdf>

²⁷⁰ Virtual Advanced Placement Program RFP; retrieved August 13, 2012, <http://usny.nysed.gov/rttt/rfp/sa-08/>

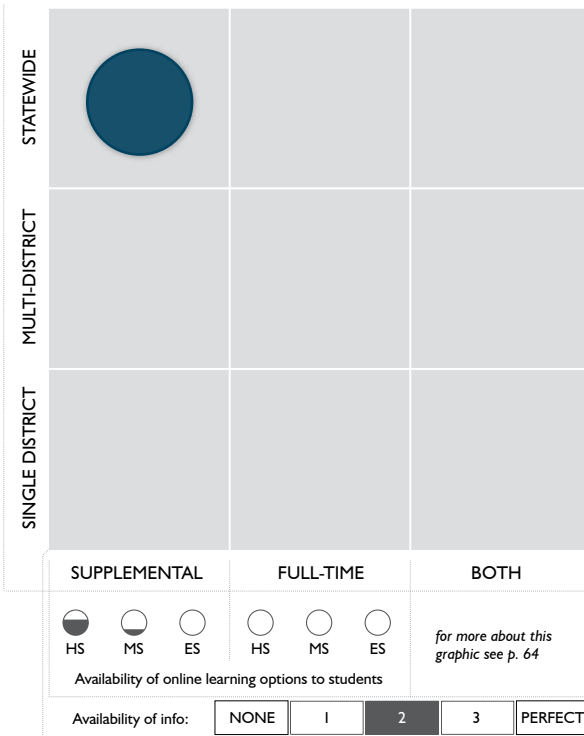
²⁷¹ New York Statewide Educational Technology Plan; August 7, 2012, <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/technology/>

²⁷² Virtual High School framework; August 7, 2012, <http://www.regents.nysed.gov/meetings/2010Meetings/February2010/0210emscd1.htm>

²⁷³ Board of Regents meeting minutes; retrieved August 7, 2012, <http://www.regents.nysed.gov/meetings/archived-2012.html>

NORTH CAROLINA

STATE SNAPSHOT 2012

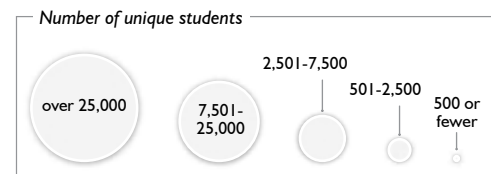


■ Full-time options

None.

■ State virtual school

North Carolina Virtual Public School is the second largest state virtual school in the country with 97,170 course enrollments in SY 2011-12, an increase of 10% from the previous year.



Essentially all the online education activity in North Carolina is through North Carolina Virtual Public School (NCVPS), the state virtual school. Legislation prohibits any state-funded entity from offering “e-learning opportunities” without the approval of NCVPS.²⁷⁴ State board policy also places similar restrictions on for-credit online courses supplied by vendors: “Any K-7 e-learning course or 8-12 course taken for credit toward a diploma must first be approved for credit by the NC Virtual Public School.”²⁷⁵

In 2011, SB8 significantly revised charter school law in North Carolina, but it did not specifically address virtual charter schools. In 2012, the North Carolina Virtual Academy (NCVA), an initiative of the North Carolina Learns nonprofit organization, was given approval by Cabarrus County Public Schools to submit a charter application to the State Board of Education (SBE) postulating that SB8 effectively removed the moratorium on statewide full-time virtual charter schools. Before NCVA submitted its application for authorization, the SBE instructed its E-Learning Commission to develop guidelines and performance measures for virtual charter schools, delaying SBE action on the subsequent NCVA application. NCVA filed a lawsuit in March 2012, and an administrative law judge ruled that because the SBE failed to act on the NCVA application in a timely manner, the virtual charter school could open for SY 2012-13. Per the application, NCVA planned to enroll up to 2,750 students in its first year (at the state per pupil funding rate of \$6,753).²⁷⁶ The case was appealed to superior court by the SBE, 89 of 115 school boards in the state, and the North Carolina School Boards Association. In June 2012, the court overturned the administrative judge, ruling that NCVA could not open and that only the SBE had the authority²⁷⁷ to determine which charters it will review and approve. As of September 2012, it appears that no online charter schools will open in North Carolina for SY 2012-13.

²⁷⁴ SB897, 2010-31; retrieved July 1, 2012, <http://www.ncleg.net/Sessions/2009/Bills/Senate/PDF/S897v8.pdf>

²⁷⁵ State Board Policy GCS M-001. Section 10; retrieved July 1, 2012, <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/accountability/policies/general>

²⁷⁶ NCVA fast track charter application, retrieved June 15, 2012, <http://www.newsobserver.com/content/media/2012/6/6/Charter%20Application%20FINAL.pdf>

²⁷⁷ Under state law, three entities can approve charter schools: the State Board of Education, a local school district, and the university system. However, a local school district or the university system can only give initial approval, and final approval must come from the State Board.

NCVPS has the second highest number of enrollments of any state virtual school, with 97,170 course enrollments in SY 2011-12, an increase of 10% from the previous year. Session Law 2011-145²⁷⁸ (2011) removed the cap on operating costs for NCVPS and removed prohibitions against offering physical education and offering courses to grades K-8. It also confirmed that NCVPS will use funds generated by a new formula created in 2010 (detailed below) to provide online courses to all public school students at no cost to the student. Students must get permission to enroll in NCVPS courses from their school district. The legislation also directed NCVPS to develop a plan to offer courses to non-public schools and out-of-state educational entities.

In 2010, SB897²⁷⁹ radically changed the NCVPS funding model. The law established an allotment formula to “create a sustainable source of funding that increases commensurate with student enrollment” and recognized “the extent to which projected enrollment in e-learning courses affects funding required for other allotments that are based on ADM.” The SBE implemented an initial NCVPS allotment formula in 2010 based on forward funding; the funding was reallocated from school districts to NCVPS based on district NCVPS course enrollments from the previous year with an adjustment for projected enrollment growth. The formula created controversy and was revisited in 2011 to rectify inequities between larger and smaller districts.

The funding formula reduces school district teacher allocations to cover NCVPS instructional costs, resulting in a reduction in the teacher pay allotment across North Carolina. A flat course fee (instructional fee) is assessed per district enrollment in NCVPS courses. Fees vary based on the course type: summer, semester, or year-long courses. The Department of Public Instruction (DPI) projects the cost of NCVPS enrollments for each district based on historical enrollment patterns, and in August, state allocation for teacher pay for the number of online courses is reduced by 75% of the cost of those enrollments. There is a reconciliation in February of each year, and districts that have enrolled less than 75% of the projected NCVPS enrollment are given a refund, so districts only pay for actual enrollments. If a district has exceeded its projection (enrolled 75 to 100% of actual enrollment), then additional funding is taken from the district and directed to NCVPS.

The legislation provided two additional sources of funds to operate NCVPS. The first is a \$2 million reserve fund created by a reduction in the per-pupil allotment in grades 6-12. The reserve fund is available to a school district that wants to exceed 100% of its projection enrollments in NCVPS courses. Unused reserve funds carry over to the next fiscal year and are replenished annually by the school system allocation reduction up to the original \$2 million level. The second is a reduction to school districts’ per-pupil allotment in grades 6-12 to create funding of \$3.2 million for operation and administration of NCVPS.

The NCVPS formula offers a different approach to funding a state virtual school. It addresses concerns that students in state virtual school courses are being funded twice (via local district and state virtual school funds). In the two years since districts knew they would be paying for NCVPS courses, enrollments went up by 32%, making North Carolina the only state where district administrators are choosing to pay for online supplemental courses from a state virtual school at a relatively high rate. The NCVPS formula does not, however, include two provisions that have been central to the growth of Florida Virtual School (FLVS). In Florida, the student right to choose a course from FLVS is in statute, and the number of students who can take a course from FLVS is not limited—therefore funding to FLVS is not limited either.

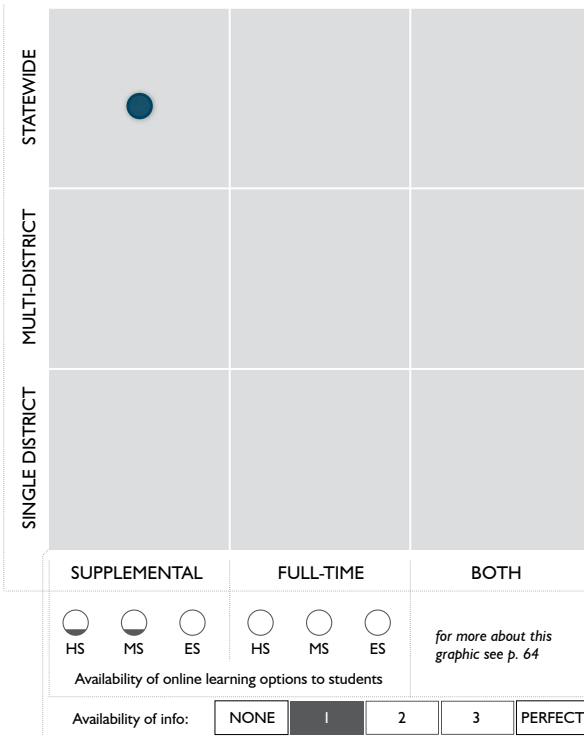
The North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics (NCSSM) is a public, residential high school for gifted, high-performing juniors and seniors. It offers a combination of online and face-to-face courses. NCVPS has a memorandum of agreement with NCSSM that authorizes it to offer courses to qualified students who cannot be accommodated in the residential program.

²⁷⁸ Session Law 2011 – 145; retrieved July 22, 2012, <http://www.ncleg.net/sessions/2011/bills/house/pdf/h200v9.pdf>

²⁷⁹ SB897, 2010-31; retrieved July 1, 2012, <http://www.ncleg.net/Sessions/2009/Bills/Senate/PDF/S897v8.pdf>

NORTH DAKOTA

STATE SNAPSHOT 2012

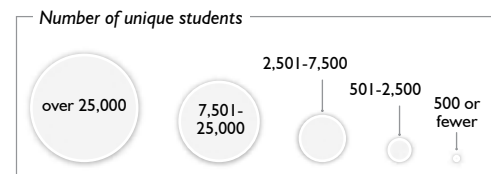


State virtual school

North Dakota Center for Distance Education served 3,000 course enrollments in SY 2011-12; 1,200 of which came from within North Dakota.

Policy

Out-of-state providers must receive approval to deliver services within the state; nine applications were submitted and three providers were approved for SY 2012-13.



The only statewide online program in North Dakota is the North Dakota Center for Distance Education (ND CDE), which offers online and print courses that are self-paced and scheduled. The center is a partially state-funded (20%) supplemental program launched in fall 1996 that serves middle and high school students. (ND CDE is a reorganization of the North Dakota Division of Independent Study). In SY 2011-12 the program served 3,000 online course enrollments, a 20% increase; 1,800 of those enrollments were from out-of-state students. Districts that at one time sent students to ND CDE are beginning to partner with local colleges on dual credit courses, and to utilize out-of state providers to create their own online programs and alternative school curricula. ND CDE is funded via state appropriation and course fees. Local school districts must approve enrollment of local students and determine whether the student or school pays the course fee.

Apart from the legislation that created the North Dakota Division of Independent Study²⁸⁰ and the law that changed the name to the Center for Distance Education, North Dakota has little legislation related to online activity. In 2007, North Dakota passed a law²⁸¹ that required the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) to set up a process for approving online courses. The approval process does not “apply to a course provided electronically between approved schools in North Dakota.”

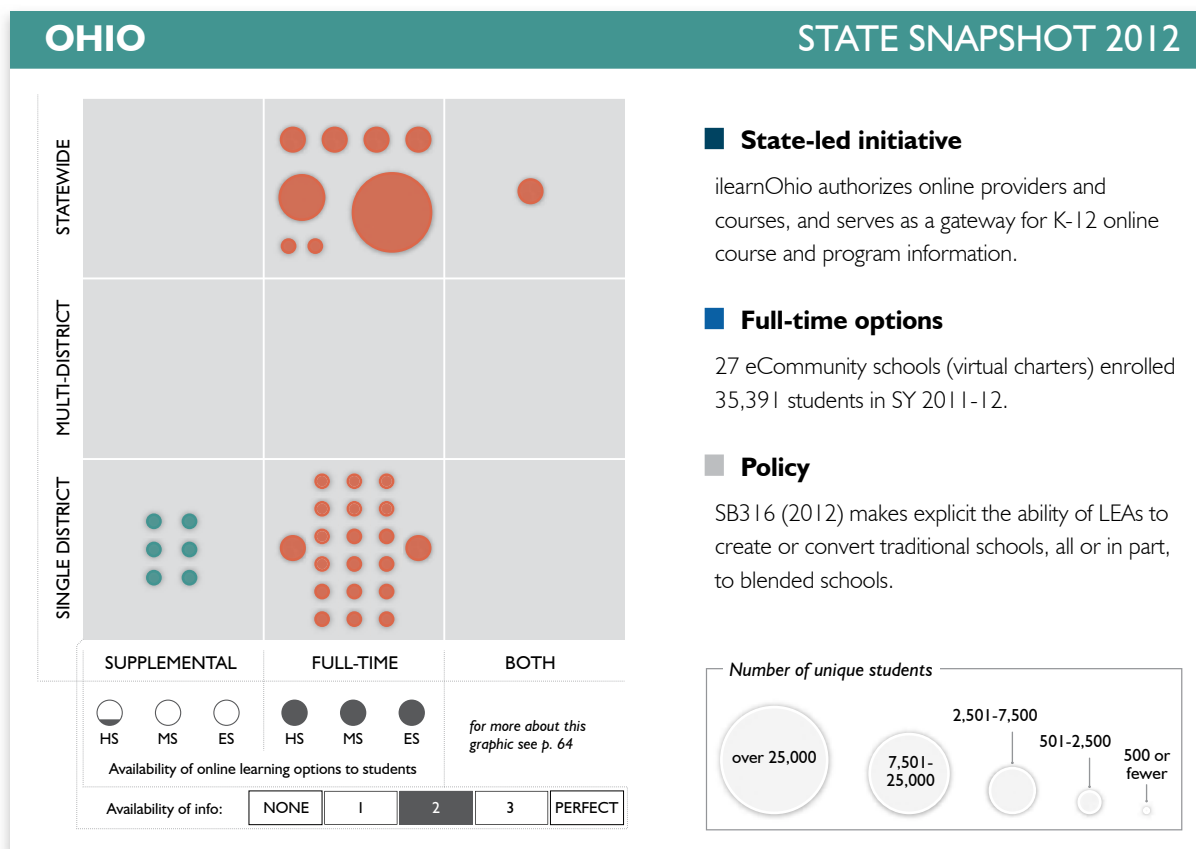
North Dakota Century Code 15.1-21-15 allows North Dakota schools to provide academic services through the use of out-of-state electronic course providers.²⁸² The approval process is twofold: 1) Schools making out-of-state electronic coursework available to students must obtain annual approval; and 2) Out-of-state providers also must obtain annual approval.

Nine school applications were submitted for SY 2012-13, and three providers were approved: Aventa Learning, Jefferson County eSchool, and Bridgewater Academy.

²⁸⁰ Chapter 15-19; retrieved July 2, 2012, <http://www.legis.nd.gov/cencode/t15c19.pdf>

²⁸¹ HB1491; retrieved July 2, 2012, <http://www.legis.nd.gov/assembly/60-2007/bill-text/HBIR0400.pdf>

²⁸² North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, school and provider application forms, instructions and rubrics; retrieved July 2, 2012, <http://www.dpi.state.nd.us/approve/electronic.shtm>



Most of Ohio's online and blended learning activity is through its eCommunity schools; there is some district-level activity, and iLearnOhio is a state-led initiative that acts as an online resource for K-12 students and provides an online catalog of 485 online courses for high school students. Twenty-seven Ohio eCommunity schools (also called eschools and e-schools in legislation) served 35,391 students in SY 2011-12, a 14% increase from 2010-11.²⁸³ There are 26 eCommunity schools operating in SY 2012-13. Twenty of the eCommunity schools serve students in grades K-12, while the remainder primarily serves students in high school.²⁸⁴ A community school is similar to a charter school in other states; an eCommunity school is an Internet- or computer-based community school in which the enrolled students work primarily from their residences.

HB153 (2011)²⁸⁵ created and funded a Digital Learning Task Force to “develop a strategy for the expansion of digital learning that enables students to customize their education, produces cost savings, and meets the needs of Ohio’s economy.” SB316 (2012)²⁸⁶ passed as a result of the work of that task force. It defines digital and blended learning, while making explicit the ability of LEAs to create or convert traditional schools, all or in part, to blended schools. Connections Education opened three Nexus schools in the 2012-13 school year that offer a blended learning experience to students in grades 9-12 in Cleveland, Columbus, and Toledo.

²⁸³ School enrollment data retrieved from Ohio Department of Education, Interactive Local Report Card; retrieved August 30, 2011, <http://ilrc.ode.state.oh.us/>

²⁸⁴ List of e-schools; retrieved August 17, 2012, <http://www.ode.state.oh.us/GD/Templates/Pages/ODE/ODEDetail.aspx?page=3&TopicRelationID=1168&ContentID=9473&Content=129060>

²⁸⁵ HB153 (2011); retrieved August 8, 2012, http://www.legislature.state.oh.us/BillText129/129_HB_153_EN_N.html. Provisions specific to online learning can be found in sections discussing distance learning, digital learning, online instruction, “internet- or computer-based community school,” and the “clearinghouse.”

²⁸⁶ SB316 (2012); retrieved August 8, 2012, http://www.legislature.state.oh.us/BillText129/129_SB_316_EN_N.html

HB153 had a significant impact on virtual education, and included the following provisions:²⁸⁷

- Terminated the moratorium on new Internet- or computer-based community schools (e-schools) on January 1, 2013, but limited the number of new e-schools that may open to five per year. If more than five e-schools wish to open, the five will be selected by lottery.
- Directed the superintendent of public instruction to develop operational standards for e-schools for possible enactment by the General Assembly. Required e-schools to comply with the legislative standards if they are enacted by January 1, 2013, or iNACOL's standards if legislative standards are not enacted by that date. Schools must comply by July 2013.
- Repealed the requirement that e-schools spend a specified minimum amount per pupil on instruction. Required the State Board of Education to adopt standards for determining the amount of operating expenditures for classroom instruction and for non-classroom purposes spent by an e-school (and other schools as well) by July 2012.

The legislation also required that the Board of Regents create a clearinghouse of online courses based on principles including: "Students may earn an unlimited number of academic credits through distance learning courses," and "Student advancement to higher coursework shall be based on a demonstration of subject area competency instead of completion of any particular number of hours of instruction." iLearnOhio launched as a dedicated online course resource for K-12 students, replacing the OhioLearns! Gateway. It reviews providers and courses before listing them in its catalog;²⁸⁸ there were 18 approved providers as of August 2012. Some funding is available to pay for Advanced Placement courses for students; otherwise students must work with their districts to pay for courses. School districts have the final say on the amount of credit awarded. The state has appropriated \$675,000 per fiscal year to support the provider and course approval processes.

Community schools, including eCommunity schools, receive state funds directly from the state at the same per-pupil base formula and special education weighted amount as traditional districts; these funds have been transferred from school district allocations.²⁸⁹ They are not eligible for extra state assistance.

A July 2009 report by the Ohio Alliance for Public Charter Schools²⁹⁰ suggested that eCommunity schools have achieved better results than comparable traditional school districts, especially when looking at year-to-year student improvement. In addition, Education Sector posted a blog series in spring 2011 analyzing e-schools in Ohio.²⁹¹ It offered an in-depth analysis of the 27 eCommunity schools based on adequate yearly progress, size, regional versus statewide student draw, student demographics, and online student mobility. It raised concerns about the accountability of eCommunity schools, especially for those receiving waivers from standard accountability measures, such as alternative schools. The series was discussed in the Quality and Accountability section of *Keeping Pace 2011*.

²⁸⁷ Details about HB153 are from the Ohio Legislative Service Commission analysis of the bill found at <http://www.lsc.state.oh.us/analyses129/11-hb153-129.pdf>; search for "e-school" for provisions specific to online learning. Many of the bullet points are direct quotes from the analysis.

²⁸⁸ iLearnOhio Provider Guidelines; retrieved August 8, 2012, <http://www.ilearnohio.org/pdf/CourseProviderGuidelines.pdf>

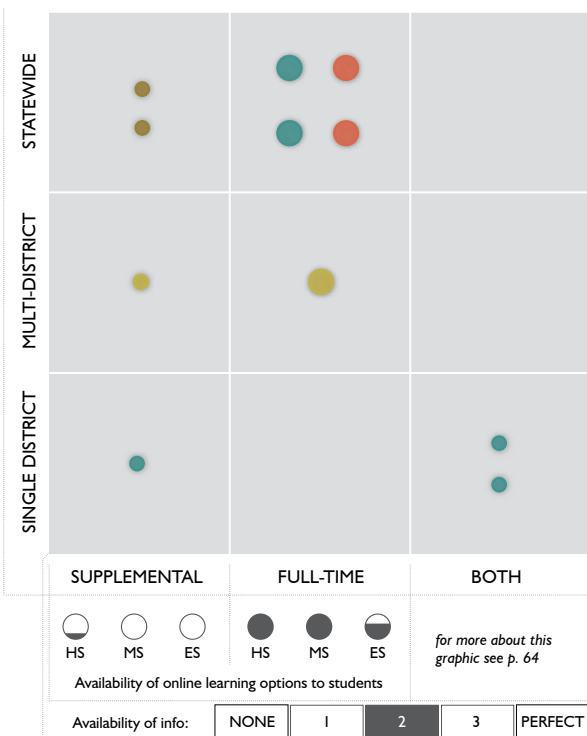
²⁸⁹ Community school funding information; retrieved August 17, 2012, <http://www.ode.state.oh.us/GD/Templates/Pages/ODE/ODEDetail.aspx?Page=3&TopicRelationID=998&Content=115088>

²⁹⁰ The Ohio Alliance for Public Charter Schools study, E-schools Show Superior Results; retrieved August 27, 2011, http://www.oapcs.org/files/EschoolStudy_final6-24-09.pdf

²⁹¹ Education Sector blog series on Ohio e-schools; retrieved August 8, 2012 <http://www.quickanded.com/tag/ohio-e-schools-blog-series>

OKLAHOMA

STATE SNAPSHOT 2012



■ Full-time options

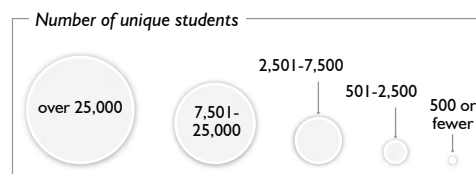
Oklahoma Virtual High School and Oklahoma Virtual Academy; Oklahoma Connections Academy opened SY 2011-12.

■ Postsecondary

Two university-sponsored, tuition-based high school programs.

■ Number of students

4,810 students were enrolled in either full-time or supplemental online programs in SY 2011-12.



Oklahoma has both fully online and supplemental online programs operating statewide, as well as several district programs. Three fully online schools were open in SY 2011-12: Oklahoma Virtual High School, (Advanced Academics), Oklahoma Virtual Academy (K12 Inc.), and Oklahoma Connections Academy (Connections Academy). Supplemental online programs include the University of Oklahoma Independent Learning High School and Oklahoma State University K-12 Distance Learning Academy. Additionally, there is a blended program that combines virtual learning with drop-in centers throughout the state, (Epic One-on-One Charter School). Students can transfer across districts during the state's annual open transfer period of January 1 through April 1. State funding is paid to the school district based on standard state per-pupil public school funding. The Oklahoma Department of Education reports 4,810 unique students took online courses in SY 2011-12 through existing full-time and supplemental online providers, an 8% increase from the previous year.

In June 2012, State Department of Education rule²⁹² created the Oklahoma Supplemental Online Course Program (OSOCP) pursuant to SB280 (2011).²⁹³ The Oklahoma Department of Education website lists 13 providers approved as of September 2012. The site also offers an explanation of the program by stating that "Oklahoma requires all public schools to offer supplemental online opportunities for their students."²⁹⁴ Key elements of the rule include:

- "Districts shall offer individual academically approved and educationally appropriate online supplemental courses to students who are enrolled in the local school district. Students enrolled in supplemental online courses through the local public school district must meet all enrollment and eligibility criteria set by the district, the Oklahoma State Board of Education Rules, and Oklahoma State Statutes."

²⁹² State Board rule; retrieved August 21, 2012 <http://ok.gov/sde/sites/ok.gov.sde/files/Rules-Ch15Sub34SuppOnlineCourses.pdf>

²⁹³ SB280 (2011); retrieved August 21, 2012, <http://www.oklegislature.gov/BillInfo.aspx?Bill=sb280>

²⁹⁴ Supplemental Online Course Providers; retrieved August 21, 2012, <http://ok.gov/sde/node/3544#List>

- “Each Oklahoma public school district shall provide enrolled students the opportunity to participate in supplemental online courses that comply with the standard curriculum of the public school. Once a student has made a request to enroll in supplemental online course(s), the district will be obligated to take necessary steps to determine the educational appropriateness of the request and to make online course(s) available to the student.”
- Oklahoma public school students may take supplemental online courses from any online course provider selected and approved by the district and that meets the criteria established by the Oklahoma State Board of Education. The school district shall not limit a student’s access to supplemental online courses by either policy or application of internal or customary procedures.
- The “school district shall provide funding for online courses ... [P]ublic school students will be allowed to take up to the academic equivalent of five (5) hours of supplemental online instruction per day at no cost to the student.”
- “[O]ne credit may be granted for required or elective courses consisting of a minimum of 120 instructional hours or in which students demonstrate mastery of Oklahoma’s PASS and/or CCSS in one-credit courses without specified instructional time.” Otherwise, “[s]tudents who elect to enroll in supplemental online courses ... are still required to complete the equivalent number of hours of instruction as regularly enrolled students in the district and must satisfy the same attendance requirements of the district.”
- “[T]eachers shall be: 1) appropriately certified in accordance with Oklahoma Administrative Rule 210: 35-21-2 to teach in the content area of the course offered, or 2) a faculty member at an accredited institution of higher education, possessing the specific content expertise necessary to teach the course. All courses offered through OSOCP shall be aligned with Oklahoma’s Priority Academic Student Skills (PASS) curriculum standards and/or Common Core State Standards (CCSS). Local districts have control regarding the method by which they deliver online courses to enrolled students.”

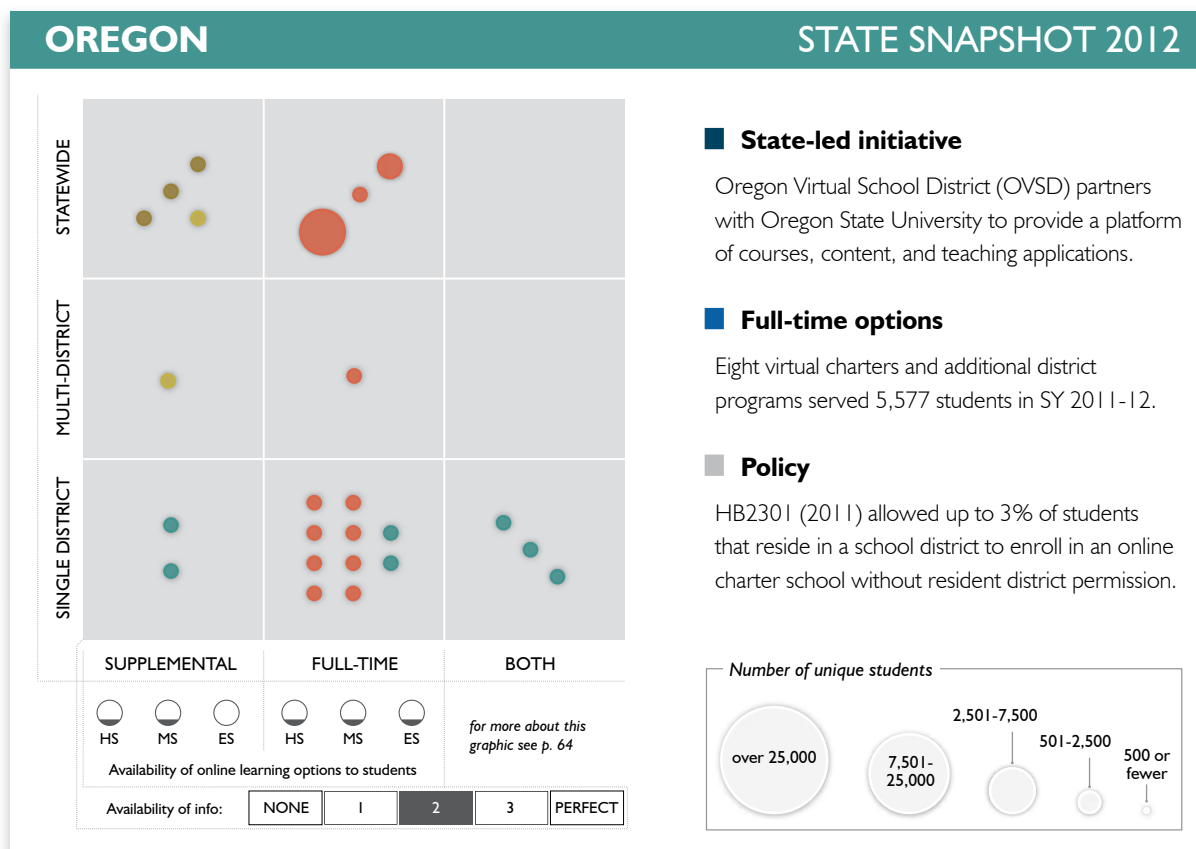
SB1816²⁹⁵ (2012) created a new authorizer for a statewide online charter school, the Statewide Virtual Charter School Board. The board will lead on:

- Providing the governing body of the statewide virtual charter school.
- Offering oversight of the operations of the statewide virtual charter school.
- Reviewing and negotiating contracts with potential providers; each provider will be considered a separate site for the purposes of reporting and accountability.
- Establishing policies and procedures for student admissions, eligibility, student transfers, approval of online courses, and student enrollment.

SB2319 (2010)²⁹⁶ confirmed that students should be counted by their school for attendance when students are participating in online courses approved by the district board of education. The law also directed the State Board of Education to adopt additional regulations for online courses addressing specific issues defined in law related to admissions, enrollment in appropriate courses, and mastery of competencies “rather than Carnegie Units.”

²⁹⁵ SB1816 (2012); retrieved August 21, 2012, <http://www.oklegislature.gov/BillInfo.aspx?Bill=SB1816&session=1200>

²⁹⁶ SB2319 (2010); retrieved August 21, 2012, <http://www.oklegislature.gov/BillInfo.aspx?Bill=SB2319&session=1000>



Oregon has fully online schools, district-level part- and full-time online programs, and the Oregon Virtual School District (OVSD), a state-led initiative. HB2301 (2011) and a series of education reform initiatives passed in 2012 give students more flexibility in online learning options.

Online programs

Eight fully online schools served 5,577 students statewide in SY 2011-12; two additional online charters opened for SY 2012-13;²⁹⁷ in addition there are two fully online single-district programs, and one new statewide school that opened in SY 2012-13.²⁹⁸ Programs include Oregon Connections Academy with 2,857 students, Oregon Virtual Academy with 1,333 students, and Clackamas Web Academy with 450 students.

OVSD is a state-led initiative that provides a platform of courses, content, and teaching applications to 460 schools across Oregon, serving 150,000 users. Oregon State University (OSU) partners with the OVSD by developing online courses and hosting the OVSD open source course management system through the OSU Open Source Lab. It does not offer courses directly, but sources them from private providers including the Florida Virtual School. The OVSD Repository offers teachers access to 150 middle and high school course templates, interactive learning objects, and streaming video lessons for instruction. The OVSD does not register students, but schools use OVSD to supplement their classes and provide student ePortfolios. Teachers have used the portal to create 6,500 customized teaching units to supplement their curriculum. OVSD received \$970,000 from the State School Fund to underwrite operations and teacher training. In addition OVSD

²⁹⁷ Enrollment numbers retrieved from Oregon Department of Education Fall Membership Reports 2011-12; retrieved September 21, 2012, <http://www.ode.state.or.us/search/page/?=3225>

²⁹⁸ Oregon Department of Education Online Program listing; retrieved September 21, 2012, <http://www.ode.state.or.us/search/results/?id=334>

provides support services to 274,000 students and teachers in 129 districts and ESDs in Google Applications for Education.

There are a number of district programs in Oregon that opened for SY 2012-13, including Hillsboro School District, which opened the Hillsboro Online Academy to serve full- and part-time students, and Portland School District, which is serving 1,300 credit recovery students through its Scholars Program. In addition, Astoria School District, Fossil School District, and the Northwest Regional ESD opened online schools and programs using the OVSD portal and Florida Virtual School courses. OSU Extension, Portland State University Independent Study, and Chemeketa Community College Early College offer dual credit early college programs for high school students.

Oregon Virtual Education (ORVED) works with districts to offer full- and part-time options to students statewide. It served 309 students in SY 2011-12, and opened a fully virtual charter school for SY 2012-13. ORVED is run out of the Northwest Regional Education Services District (ESD).

State policies

Oregon has an extensive online learning policy history, much of which can be found at www.kpk12.com/states/.

HB2301²⁹⁹ took effect July 1, 2011, and allowed:

- Students to choose at the course level.
- Students to enroll in virtual charter schools without approval of the school district where the student resides, unless more than 3% of the students who reside in the district are enrolled in virtual charter schools. If more than 3% of a district's students enroll in a virtual charter not sponsored by the district, then the student must receive permission from the district. While that permission is not guaranteed, the student can appeal to the State Board of Education.
- Up to 5% of a virtual charter school's instructional hours to be taught by teachers who are not licensed in Oregon.

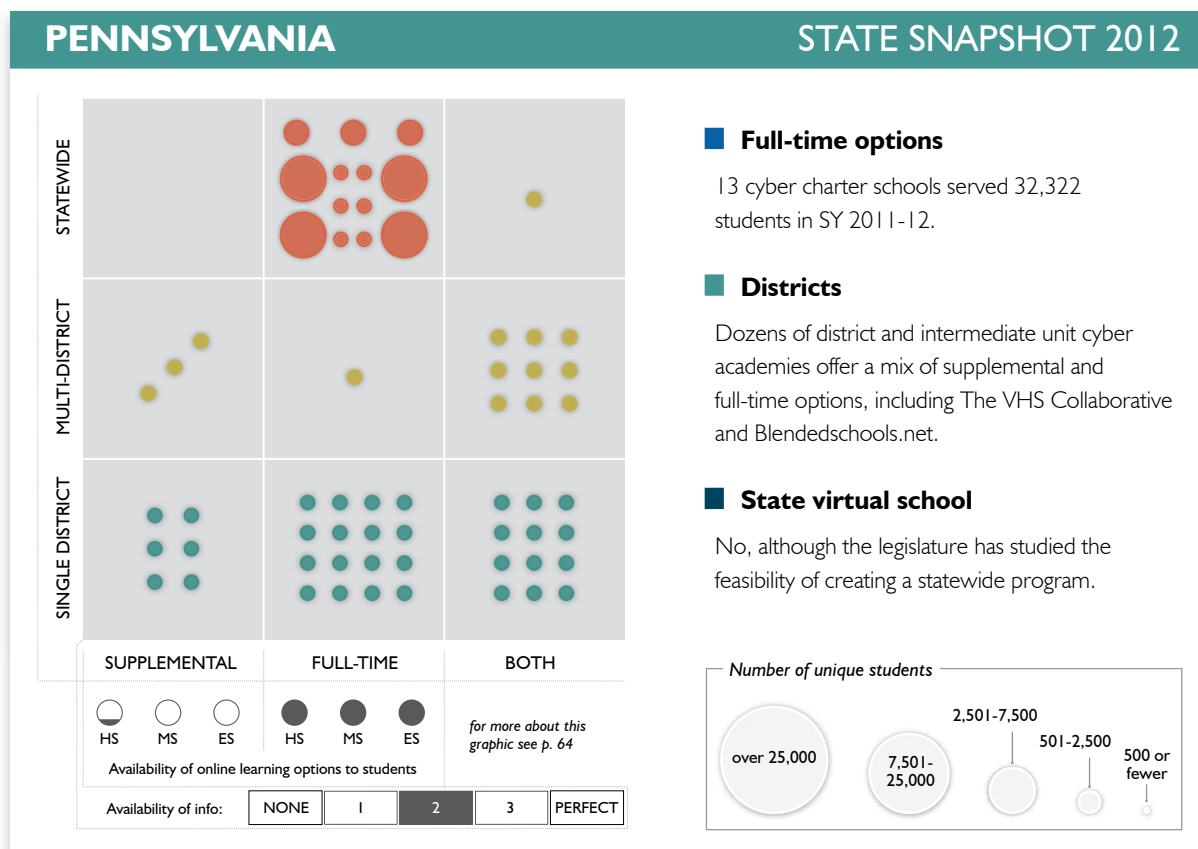
Oregon passed a series of education reform bills in 2012 designed to align the state public education system from pre-kindergarten through college. Reform measures include: creation of the Oregon Education Investment Board, charged with developing an education investment strategy to improve defined learning outcomes from early childhood through public schools, colleges, and universities; a measure that made the governor the superintendent of public instruction and created a chief operating officer to manage the Education Investment board's recommendation and reform implementation. The Early Learning Council was established to streamline and strengthen early childhood services to at-risk youth to ensure all children are ready to learn when they enter kindergarten.

SB994 (2011) created the Task Force on Virtual School Governance to make recommendations to the 2012 legislature on new governance standards for online schools.³⁰⁰ The task force requested additional time to expand its scope to include blended learning. It is expected to deliver its recommendations in October 2012.³⁰¹

²⁹⁹ HB2301; retrieved August 13, 2012, <http://www.leg.state.or.us/11reg/measpdf/hb2300.dir/hb2301.intro.pdf>

³⁰⁰ SB994 (2011); retrieved August 13, 2012, <http://gov.oregonlive.com/bill/2011/SB994/>

³⁰¹ Joint Interim Task Force on Virtual School Governance Report; retrieved August 13, 2012 http://content.govdelivery.com/attachments/ORLEG/2011/12/14/file_attachments/74680/JVSG_Report_Full_Final.pdf. This report provides an excellent history of online education and policy in Oregon.



Pennsylvania had 13 cyber charter schools³⁰² serving 32,322 students in grades K-12 in SY 2011-12,³⁰³ a 13% increase from SY 2010-11. A growing number of districts, independent units (IU), and consortia are providing online courses for area students in an attempt to draw students back from cyber charters. The state does not have a state virtual school, but Blendedschools.net has a significant presence in the state, working with 76,000 students in 174 districts.

Online programs

Cyber charters have dominated the K-12 online options in Pennsylvania since SusQ-Cyber Charter School first opened in 1998. Enrollments have grown steadily. Pennsylvania Cyber Charter School, with 10,559 students, is one of the largest virtual charters in the country; it graduated almost 1,300 students in 2012. Agora Cyber Charter served 8,142 students and Commonwealth Connections Academy served 5,550 students in SY 2011-12. While five of the 13 cyber charters saw some double digit percentage growth in enrollments, the other eight saw either less than 5% growth or a drop in enrollments. Enrollment details for all 13 cyber charters are available on the *Keeping Pace* website at <http://kpk12.com/states/>. Frontier Virtual Charter High School surrendered its charter in June 2012 due to financial struggles, but four new cyber charters have been approved to open in fall 2012.

Through SY 2011-12, when a student left a district for a charter or cyber charter, the district would receive a bill for the cost of that student. The amount varied based on the home district, but

³⁰² Cyber Charter Schools Listing 2011-12; retrieved July 25, 2012, http://www.education.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/charter_schools/7356/charter_schools___where_we're_located/508152

³⁰³ Enrollment public school 2011-12, Pennsylvania Department of Education; retrieved July 25, 2012, http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/enrollment/7407/public_school_enrollment_reports/620541

averaged around \$12,808.³⁰⁴ The state would then partially reimburse the district at the end of the school year for the cost of the student. In 2010-11 the reimbursement dropped to an average of 25%, and it was completely eliminated in Governor Corbett's 2011-12 budget. The situation was analyzed in a report from the state auditor general,³⁰⁵ who recommended a moratorium on new cyber charters until it could be resolved (a moratorium was not implemented). An updated report was issued by the state auditor in June 2012. It recommended setting the cyber charter funding rate at \$6,500 per student; the report also recommended Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) increase its oversight of charters and cyber charters.³⁰⁶ As of September 2012, there have been no further changes to funding of cyberschool students.

Districts are responding to what they see as lost funding by opening their own cyber academies and working to bring students back. Many of these districts are working with Blendedschools.net, which reported working with 160 Pennsylvania districts that serve 75,000 students. IUs are also opening cyber service programs for students in their districts. These programs typically offer supplemental courses (although some offer a full-time option); do not have to be authorized by the PDE; and do not require separate reporting as they simply roll into overall district accountability. As a result, the total number of new cyber academies and cyber service programs is unknown. A 2011 analysis of the Pennsylvania K-12 online landscape, "Cost and Funding of State-led Virtual Learning Program Models,"³⁰⁷ estimated that "at least 158 of Pennsylvania's 501 school districts are under contract with a nonprofit or for-profit vendor of online courses," and the number is almost certainly higher now.

State policies and accountability

With the passage of Act 88 (2002), the General Assembly allowed for the establishment of cyber charter schools in Pennsylvania.³⁰⁸ Oversight is regulated by a combination of charter school laws that oversee all charter schools, as well as regulations specific to cyber charters. Pennsylvania System of Cyber Charter Review (PASCCR), the charter school's annual report to the state, and the original charter school application to PDE explain how each school meets Pennsylvania's academic standards and assessment requirements, what technical support will be given to students, how student work will be monitored, what type of communication will be held with students and parents, and how often that communication will take place. Additional details about charter authorization, reporting, funding, and requirements can be found at www.kpk12.com/states/.

Stanford University's Center for Research on Education Outcomes (CREDO) released a report in April 2011 titled "Charter School Performance in Pennsylvania."³⁰⁹ While the report looked at student performance among all charter schools, it also looked specifically at eight cyber charter schools from 2007-10. It found that cyber students were more likely to be white, ineligible for subsidized meals, and repeating a grade than the general student population. However, the starting score on state achievement tests for cyber students is significantly higher than for brick-and-mortar charter students in both reading and math. The report found that "cyber charter students have significantly smaller gains in reading and math than those of their traditional public school peers."

³⁰⁴ Special report: The Commonwealth should revise its charter and cyber charter school funding mechanisms, September 2010, Auditor General Jack Wagner; retrieved August 9, 2012, <http://www.auditorgen.state.pa.us/reports/performance/special/specharterfundingreport100510.pdf>

³⁰⁵ Ibid

³⁰⁶ Charter and Cyber Charter Education Funding Reform Should Save Taxpayers \$365 Million Annually; retrieved August 8, 2012, <http://www.auditorgen.state.pa.us/departments/press/cybercharterspecialreport201206.pdf>

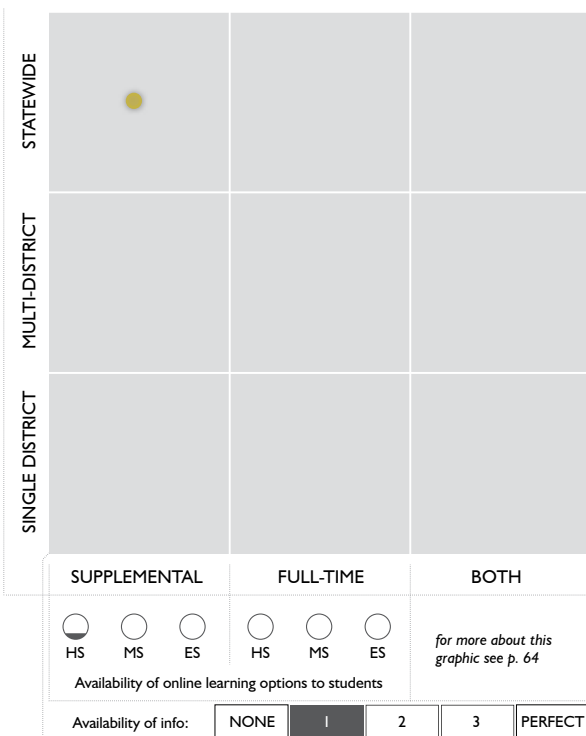
³⁰⁷ Cost and Funding of State-led Virtual Learning Programs; retrieved August 19, 2012, <http://lbfc.legis.state.pa.us/reports/2011/52.PDF>

³⁰⁸ HB4 (2001); retrieved August 9, 2012, <http://www2.legis.state.pa.us/WU01/LI/BI/BT/2001/0/HB0004P4196.pdf>

³⁰⁹ Charter School Performance in Pennsylvania 2007-2010, Center for Research on Education Outcomes; retrieved August 19, 2012, http://credo.stanford.edu/reports/PA%20State%20Report_20110404_FINAL.pdf

RHODE ISLAND

STATE SNAPSHOT 2012



■ Full-time options

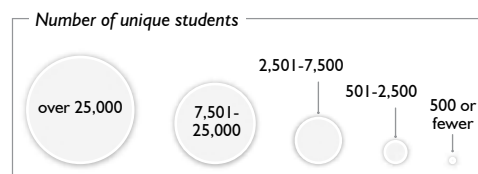
None.

■ Consortium

Northern Rhode Island Collaborative offers 80 supplemental courses to students in grades 3-12 and served 175 course enrollments in SY 2011-12.

■ Districts

633 course enrollments from 18 schools in The VHS Collaborative.



Rhode Island has no state virtual school, no statewide online schools, and little online activity. The Northern Rhode Island Collaborative, in association with the Virtual Learning Academy of the Jefferson County Educational Service Center in Ohio, offers online courses that are paid for by individual school districts. It serves grades 3-12 and offers over 80 courses. The program reported 175 course enrollments for SY 2011-12. Other virtual learning opportunities, including The VHS Collaborative, are being investigated and used by some school districts. VHS reported 633 course enrollments from Rhode Island schools from SY 2011-12, a 96% increase from 2010-11. Enrollments in VHS come from 18 schools,³¹⁰ 15% of the total number of middle and high schools in the state.

The Statewide Virtual Education Act (S2276),³¹¹ passed in 2012, formalizes virtual learning regulations and definitions, and instructs the commissioner of education to develop policies in support of and guidelines for virtual education, including specifics on an annual report to be delivered to the legislature. It also “ensures that teachers of virtual courses and other online learning activities are appropriately trained and qualified and meet certification requirements set forth by the commissioner of education.” This allows teachers outside of Rhode Island to teach virtual courses to Rhode Island students.

Two virtual charter schools are in the application process as of September 2012.³¹² Results from the application process will be posted on the *Keeping Pace* website at www.kpk12.com/states/ when available.

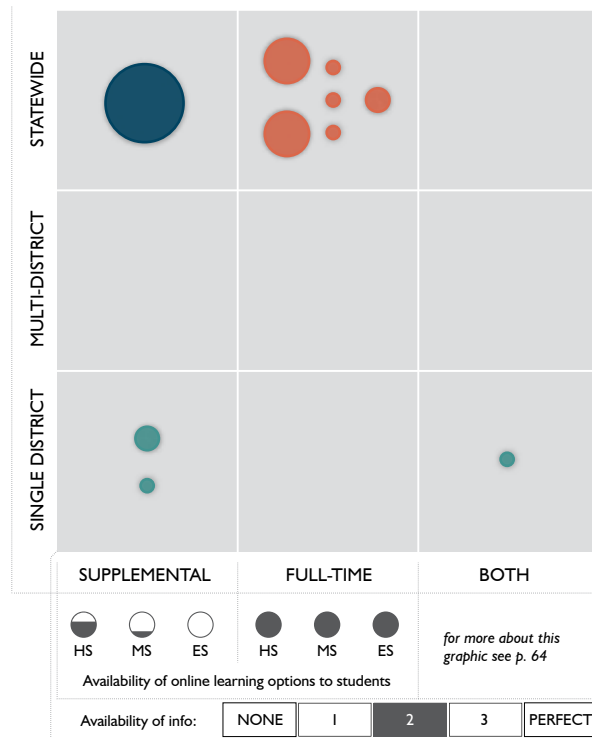
³¹⁰ The VHS Collaborative; retrieved July 2, 2012, <http://www.govhs.org/Pages/AboutUs-ParticipatingSchools>

³¹¹ S2276 The Statewide Virtual Education Act (2012); retrieved July 26, 2012, <http://www.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText12/SenateText12/S2276Aaa.pdf>

³¹² Personal communication with DOE; July 19, 2012

SOUTH CAROLINA

STATE SNAPSHOT 2012



State virtual school

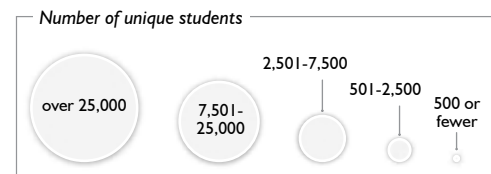
South Carolina Virtual School Program served 15,831 course enrollments in SY 2011-12.

Full-time options

Six statewide virtual charter schools served 7,985 students.

Districts

Horry, Beaufort, Richland 2, Lexington-Richland 5, Lexington 2, and Greenville County School Districts operate online programs; many of these are only summer school.



South Carolina has a state virtual school, five online charter schools, and several district programs. The six online charter schools—Palmetto State E-cademy, South Carolina Connections Academy, South Carolina Virtual Charter School (operated by K12 Inc.), South Carolina Calvert Academy, Whitmore School, and Provost Academy South Carolina—had a total of 7,985 students enrolled as of June 2012, a 4% increase from 2010-11.³¹³ The South Carolina Virtual School Program (SCVSP; the state virtual school) had 15,831 course enrollments in SY 2011-12, a 13% increase from SY 2010-11.³¹⁴ Districts that operate online programs include Horry, Beaufort, Richland 2, Lexington-Richland 5, Lexington 2, and Greenville County, some of which offer just summer school.

Act 26 (2007) formally established the SCVSP.³¹⁵ The bill makes the SCVSP available to all students under age 21, including private school and homeschooled students, and limits students to three online credits per year and 12 throughout high school. The SCVSP is a supplemental high school program (middle school students may enroll) that includes adult education students; it had a budget of \$3 million in 2011-12.

The South Carolina Public Charter School District (SCPCSD) approves virtual charter school applications; there are no enrollment limits for charter schools. The SCPCSD is one of the first charter authorizing agencies in the country to also be an LEA. Virtual charter schools are funded by the same formula applied to all charter schools in the state; funds are distributed by the SCPCSD.

State policies did not change significantly in 2012 and are available at www.kpk12.com/states/.

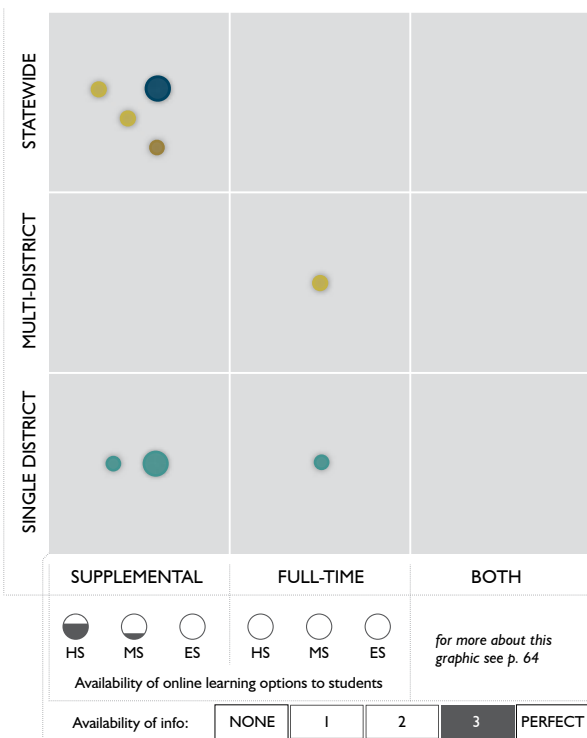
³¹³ Active Student Head Count: http://www.ed.sc.gov/data/student-counts/Student_Headcounts/ActiveStudentHeadcounts.cfm

³¹⁴ The 2010-11 enrollment number last year was incorrectly reported as 11,265, the number of unique students. The 2010-11 number was adjusted to 14,024 course enrollments.

³¹⁵ Act 26 (2007) and H3097; retrieved July 2, 2012, http://www.scstatehouse.gov/sess117_2007-2008/bills/3097.htm

SOUTH DAKOTA

STATE SNAPSHOT 2012



State virtual school

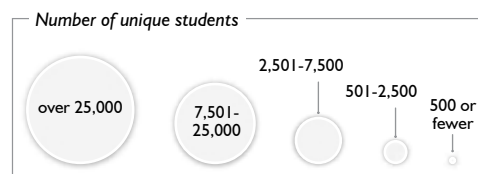
South Dakota Virtual School (SDVS) acts as a clearinghouse, and had 3,822 enrollments in 2011-12.

Full-time options

No; there is no charter law. Black Hills Online Learning Community with K12 Inc. is piloting a K-8 school for homeschooled families.

Districts / consortia

Some districts and consortia offer courses through SDVS, which approves all distance learning providers.



The South Dakota Virtual School (SDVS), a consortium of approved distance education providers offering supplemental courses managed from within the South Dakota Department of Education, is the main online learning option for students in South Dakota. SDVS was created by HB1236 (2006) and launched in March 2007. The SDVS acts as a clearinghouse; providers set the course fees and are paid directly by school districts, which have the right to refuse students' requests for an online course. It served 3,822 course enrollments in SY 2011-12, down 3% from 2010-11.

No fully online statewide school exists in the state, but in SY 2012-13 the Black Hills Online Learning Community is being piloted for homeschooled K-8 students in 16 of South Dakota's 152 districts.

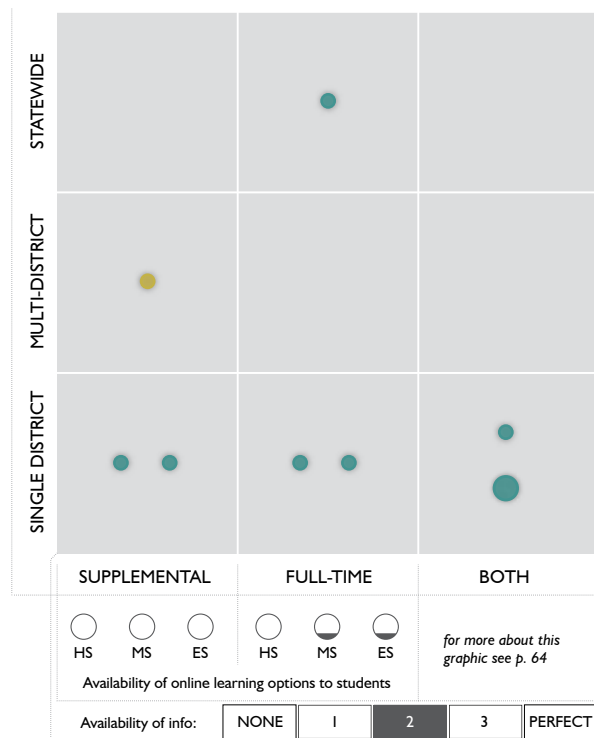
The Department of Education has established criteria for approval of distance learning providers (DLP), and reviews each course offered by a DLP for inclusion in the SDVS. More than 250 different courses have been approved. HB1113 (2007) restricted districts from putting a grade on a student transcript unless the course was from an approved DLP.³¹⁶ Each certified DLP is required to report on the types of courses offered, the number and names of districts served, the number of course registrations, completion rates, and other information. The certification only applies to programs originating from outside the school district being served.³¹⁷ This effectively limits any other programs from operating statewide.

A variety of online programs and resources are available via the SDVS, including Dakota Interactive Academic Link (DIAL) Virtual School; the E-Learning Center, which offers college-prep and AP courses; Learning Power, which offers AP classes; and High Plains Alternative School. In addition, the Sioux Falls School District offers online courses to its students.

³¹⁶ List of approved providers; retrieved July 5, 2012, <http://www.sdvs.k12.sd.us/Students/Providers.aspx>

³¹⁷ From South Dakota administrative rules specific to distance learning and the virtual school; retrieved July 2, 2012, <http://legis.state.sd.us/rules/DisplayRule.aspx?Rule=24:43:12>

TENNESSEE



State virtual school

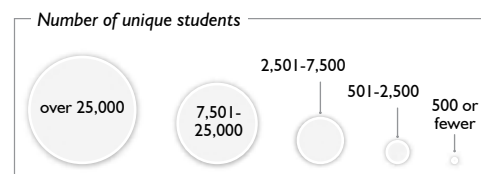
e4TN served an estimated 5,000 course enrollments in 2010-11; it lost its funding due to elimination of E2T2 and closed at the end of SY 2010-11.

Districts

Numerous district-run programs including Hamilton County Virtual School, Wilson County, Putnam County, and Dickson County.

Full-time options

Tennessee Virtual Academy began serving students statewide in SY 2011-12.



Tennessee's first full-time online statewide school, Tennessee Virtual Academy, opened for grades K-8 in SY 2011-12, serving 1,800 students; in addition, several district-run programs offer courses to their students including Hamilton County Virtual School. The state virtual school, the Effective Engaging E-learning Environment for Tennessee (e4TN), was funded through Enhancing Education Through Technology (E2T2) funds, but in 2011 it lost funding and did not operate in SY 2011-12. HB1030 (2011),³¹⁸ the Virtual Public School Act, allowed online schools. The bill's key provisions included:

- "Each virtual school student shall be required to have nine hundred (900) hours of learning opportunities per academic year, unless such student has demonstrated mastery or completion of appropriate subject areas."
- "A virtual school shall maintain an administrative office within the state."
- "Participation in a virtual education program by a student shall be at the discretion of the [local education agency] LEA in which the student is enrolled or zoned to attend."

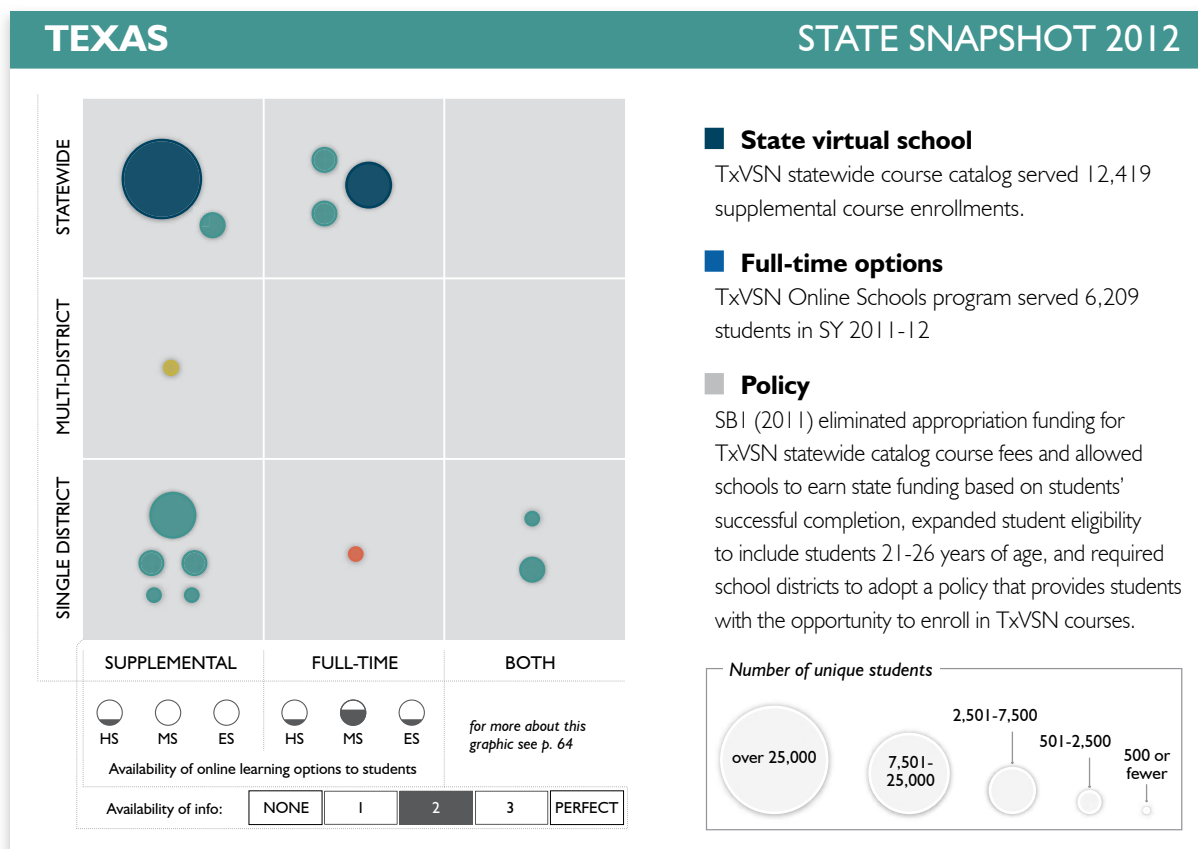
A provision in HB1030 states that "Virtual schools shall not be required to comply with maximum class size requirements." However, HB3062 (2012)³¹⁹ passed with amendments that keep the teacher-pupil ratio for online schools to the same standards as brick-and-mortar classes. In addition, it allows students the option to move through a course at their own pace.

The ELC also has the Governor's Study Partner Program (GSPP), which contains curriculum standards and professional development information for teachers and administrators, as well as resources for parents and students. Previous policy was based on SB2008 (2008).³²⁰

³¹⁸ House Bill 1030 (2011); retrieved July 2, 2012; <http://www.capitol.tn.gov/Bills/107/Bill/HB1030.pdf>

³¹⁹ House Bill 3062 (2012); retrieved July 27, 2012; <http://state.tn.us/sos/acts/107/pub/pc0999.pdf>

³²⁰ SB2008 (2008); retrieved August 29, 2012; <http://tennessee.gov/sos/acts/105/pub/pc1096.pdf>



State virtual school

TxVSN statewide course catalog served 12,419 supplemental course enrollments.

Full-time options

TxVSN Online Schools program served 6,209 students in SY 2011-12

Policy

SB1 (2011) eliminated appropriation funding for TxVSN statewide catalog course fees and allowed schools to earn state funding based on students' successful completion, expanded student eligibility to include students 21-26 years of age, and required school districts to adopt a policy that provides students with the opportunity to enroll in TxVSN courses.

Texas has a state virtual school, the Texas Virtual School Network (TxVSN), which is comprised of two components: a supplemental statewide course catalog of high school courses for students in grades 8-12 and a full-time virtual TxVSN online schools (OLS) program for public school students in grades 3-12 (grade 12 was added for SY 2012-13). In addition, there are some district programs and consortia including Houston, Katy, and Irving school districts.

The TxVSN was created by SB 1788 in 2007. Codified in Texas Education Code (TEC) Chapter 30A, the TxVSN is a partnership network administered by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) in coordination with Texas regional education service centers (ESCs), institutions of higher education, and eligible school districts and charter schools. Centralized responsibilities include leadership, administration, operations, course review, approval of required professional development for teaching online, and funding.

High school, advanced placement, and dual credit courses that are offered to students in grades 8-12 through the TxVSN statewide course catalog are provided by eligible Texas school districts and charter schools, ESCs, and institutions of higher education. TxVSN³²¹ began offering courses through its statewide course catalog in January 2009. Course enrollments grew to 17,092 between summer 2010 and spring 2011 (see Table 10), but with the elimination of allotment funding for catalog course fees in 2011-12, course enrollments dropped to 12,419,³²² a 27% reduction. SB1 (2011)³²³ made separate TxVSN allotment funding for course fees no longer available. Districts may earn state funding for students enrolled in TxVSN courses in the same manner as a student

³²¹ TxVSN overview; retrieved August 14, 2012, http://www.tea.state.tx.us/index2.aspx?id=4840&menu_id=2147483665

³²² Enrollment numbers received through personal communication with TxVSN, September 2012.

³²³ SB1; retrieved August 14, 2012, <http://www.journals.senate.state.tx.us/sjrn/821/pdf/82S106-28-F.PDF#page=35>

enrolled in a traditional classroom setting, regardless of whether the student is physically present at the school, provided that the student successfully completes the course.

Enrollments	Summer 2009	Fall 2009	Spring 2010	Summer 2009 – Spring 2010	Summer 2010	Fall 2010	Spring 2011	Summer 2010 – Spring 2011	Summer 2011	Fall 2011	Spring 2012	Summer 2011 – Spring 2012
High school	189	234	419	842	2,334	3,608	7,127	13,069	8,133	1,244	1,783	11,160
Dual enrollment	0	237	727	964	375	1,856	1,792	4,023	394	364	501	1,259
Total	189	471	1,146	1,806	2,709	5,464	8,919	17,092	8,527	1,608	2,284	12,419

Table 10: TxVSN statewide course catalog enrollment data

TxVSN Providers provide the courses offered through the TxVSN statewide course catalog and are responsible for instruction. TxVSN Receiver Districts (student's home district) approve their students' TxVSN course requests, provide ongoing support to local students enrolled in TxVSN statewide catalog courses, and award credits and diplomas. Additional details can be found on the *Keeping Pace* website at www.kpk12.com/states/.

In addition to supplemental courses offered through the TxVSN statewide course catalog, the TxVSN offers a full-time virtual program for public school students in grades 3-11, the TxVSN OLS program (formerly known as the Electronic Course Program, or eCP). The TxVSN OLS program allows participating public school districts and charter schools to earn state funding based on successful completions. Interested districts and charters must meet eligibility requirements. Three schools are currently authorized by the TEA to offer full-time online programs through the TxVSN OLS program—one charter school, Texas College Preparatory Academies (Texas Virtual Academy); and two independent school districts, Houston Independent School District (Texas Connections Academy @ Houston) and Texarkana ISD (Texarkana ISD Virtual Academy). About 6,209 students in grades 3-11 were served through TxVSN OLS program in the 2011-12 instructional year; this represents a 17% increase over the previous year. Maximum enrollment allowed at any one time is capped for each provider with increases allowed through an annual expansion request process initiated by the provider. The TxVSN OLS program expanded to include grade 11 in SY 2011-12 and will expand again to include grade 12 in 2012-13.

Another TEA initiative, Project Share, provides student resources, professional development courses, academic networking, and professional learning communities to Texas educators and students. Online resources include OnTRACK Lessons for students. These are a series of online lessons developed at the state level and electronically distributed to districts for use at the local level. The lessons are aligned to state standards and are designed to supplement instruction in core secondary subjects (English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies). The lessons provide brief explanations of concepts introduced in class and contain videos, interactives, links to additional resources, and assessments for students to use during and after traditional school hours.

In 2011, the Texas 82nd legislative session passed Senate Bill (SB) 6 which established the Instructional Materials Fund (IMF) using funds from the distribution of the permanent school fund. A school district is entitled to an annual allotment from the IMF for each student enrolled within the district. The instructional materials allotment (IMA) may be used to purchase adopted and non-adopted instructional materials, technological equipment, and technology-related services. SB6 provides ownership of the instructional materials to the district and gives the authority to sell out-

of-adoption instructional materials. The State Board of Education retains its review and adoption process. Publishers may submit updated content for both print and digital adopted instructional materials. House Bill (HB) 4294, passed during the Texas 81st legislative session, authorized the commissioner of education to adopt a list of electronic textbooks. The IMA also may be used to purchase the commissioner's list of adopted electronic textbooks. HB 2488 was also passed during the Texas 81st legislative session. HB 2488 authorized the State Board of Education to accept curriculum-aligned open-source instructional materials developed by a public institution of higher education.

State policies

Policies affecting the TxVSN, including course requirements, funding, and program requirements, are detailed on the *Keeping Pace* website at www.kpk12.com/states/.

Outside the TxVSN, districts decide which providers to use and what courses are authorized by the district. To award credit, districts must assure that a course meets all the state curriculum requirements. For the district to receive state funding—which is based on average daily attendance—students must be in attendance at school and meet the normal attendance accounting rules of the state. A student may generate either part-time or full-time Foundation School Program (FSP) funding.

Funding

Grades 9-12: If an eligible student participates in courses offered through the TxVSN and is enrolled in a Texas school district or open-enrollment charter school, the student is eligible to generate state FSP funding under TEC Chapter 42 in the same manner as a student who receives instruction in a traditional classroom, provided that the student successfully completes the course. Successful course completion is defined as earning credit for the online semester course. The district is eligible to earn FSP funding regardless of whether the student is physically present at school when taking the TxVSN online course.

If an eligible student who resides in Texas but is not enrolled in a Texas school district or open-enrollment charter school registers for a course through the TxVSN statewide course catalog (other than a student in foster care or certain dependents of military personnel), no state funding is provided. The student may enroll in a maximum of two courses per semester, and the TxVSN catalog course fee must be paid by the student.

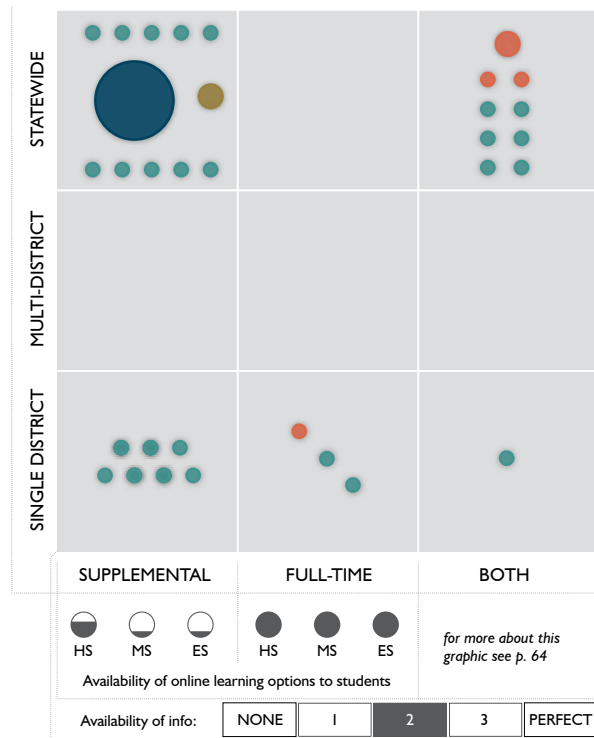
Grades 3-8, TxVSN Online Schools: Students in grades 3-8 who participate in the full-time TxVSN OLS program generate state funding from the FSP based on successful program completion. Successful program completion is defined as a student having demonstrated academic proficiency sufficient to have been promoted to the next grade level. Funding is equivalent to state funding for a student enrolled full time in a traditional classroom.

Quality assurance, teaching, and curriculum

Online courses offered through the TxVSN are reviewed to ensure they meet all of the state curriculum standards, the TEKS, as well as the iNACOL *National Standards of Quality for Online Courses*. Beginning in 2012, TxVSN also began to review TxVSN courses against accessibility standards.

UTAH

STATE SNAPSHOT 2012



State virtual school

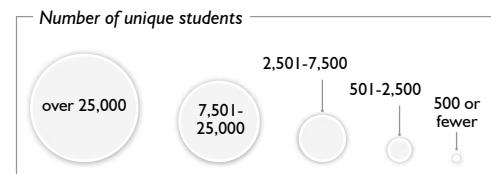
Utah Electronic High School granted 24,380 quarter credits to 11,044 unique students in SY 2011-12.

Districts

Many district programs offer a mix of supplemental and full-time options.

Policy

SB65 (2011), the Statewide Online Education Program, and SB178 (2012) implemented changes guided by the *Digital Learning Now Ten Recommendations of High Quality Digital Learning*.



Utah has a state virtual school (the Utah Electronic High School), four statewide online charter schools, and many districts offering online courses via the Statewide Online Education Program. SB65, the Statewide Online Education Program,³²⁴ was signed into law on March 30, 2011; it was amended with SB178³²⁵ and went into effect on July 1, 2012. Key elements of the state's online policy, as passed and amended, are:

- Students can supplement their brick-and-mortar education with online courses.
 - Students/parents choose the courses and course providers; the student's primary school of enrollment does not have control except to the extent that course selection is tied to the Student Education Occupation Plan (SEOP), as discussed below.
 - Subject mastery replaces seat time, which allows students to advance based on competency.
 - Section 53A-15-1206.5 of the law details the requirements for withdrawal from an online course.
 - Homeschooled and private students will be eligible for the Statewide Online Education Program.
- An eligible student may enroll in an online course offered through the Statewide Online Education Program if:
 - The online course is aligned with the student's SEOP;
 - The online course is consistent with the student's individual education plan (IEP), if the student has an IEP; and

³²⁴ SB65 (2011); retrieved August 30, 2012, <http://le.utah.gov/~2011/bills/sbillint/sb0065s01.htm>

³²⁵ SB178 (2012); retrieved September 12, 2012, <http://le.utah.gov/~2012/bills/sbillenr/sb0178.htm>

- The online course is consistent with the student’s International Baccalaureate program, if the student is participating in an international baccalaureate program.
- Funding follows the student down to the course level; from “Primary Local Education Agency (LEA) of enrollment” to “Provider LEA.”
 - Funding is based upon successful completion; the provider receives 50% (25% per .5 credit) after the withdrawal period and the remaining 50% upon credit earned.
 - Providers are incented to offer credit recovery courses, as they can receive 30% of the final 50% funding payment outside of the designated timeline for completion if the student earns the course credit prior to graduation.
 - Students may generate no more than 1.0 FTE.
- Multiple providers are authorized to offer online courses.
 - Any LEA—charter or district—can be an online provider.
 - Any LEA can contract with private providers to offer an online program.
 - The State Board of Education shall develop a report on the performance of online course providers.
 - Course providers may not limit the class size of an online course.
 - Open-entry, open-exit online courses are permitted if offered by the provider.
 - Each provider administers state assessments; the state is required to make assessments available upon course completion.
 - Any online course provider (district LEA) can apply to offer courses directly to students starting with the 2012-13 school year.
- Electronic High School is no longer listed as a provider in the Statewide Online Education Program.
- The student should enroll in an online course or declare intention during the registration time period designated by the LEA.
- The bill provides \$250,000 for the administration of the program for SY 2011-12.

Online programs

The Utah Electronic High School (EHS) is primarily a supplemental program that works with local school districts, but is able to grant diplomas to restricted groups of Utah students: those who are homeschooled exclusively, those who have dropped out of school and their class has graduated, and district referrals. All of the courses are open-entry/open-exit. EHS started in 1994 as a statewide virtual school located at the Utah State Office of Education (USOE), which funded it via USOE funds. Legislation passed in 2001 started line-item funding. This annual line item funding was \$2 million each year from 2007 through 2012 and is expected to be \$1 million for SY 2012-13. EHS does not receive per-pupil state funding allocations with resident school districts. During SY 2011-12, EHS granted 24,380 quarter credits to 11,044 individual students, a 32% increase from the previous year. To put this into perspective with similar programs, this is roughly the equivalent of 12,190 individual semester course completions. EHS implemented proctored final tests for every quarter credit granted beginning October 2007. EHS launched an open source content initiative in 2010 called the Utah Electronic High School Curriculum and is rolling it out gradually via iTunesU.

There are four statewide online charter schools in Utah. The Utah Virtual Academy is the largest; it served 2,000 K-12 students in 2011-12, a decrease of 2% from 2,042 students in 2010-11.³²⁶ The Open High School of Utah, an open source online charter school, enrolled 328 students in SY 2011-

³²⁶ 2010-11 enrollment numbers are different from numbers reported in *Keeping Pace 2011*. Enrollment numbers were received from personal communication with Utah DOE September 6, 2012.

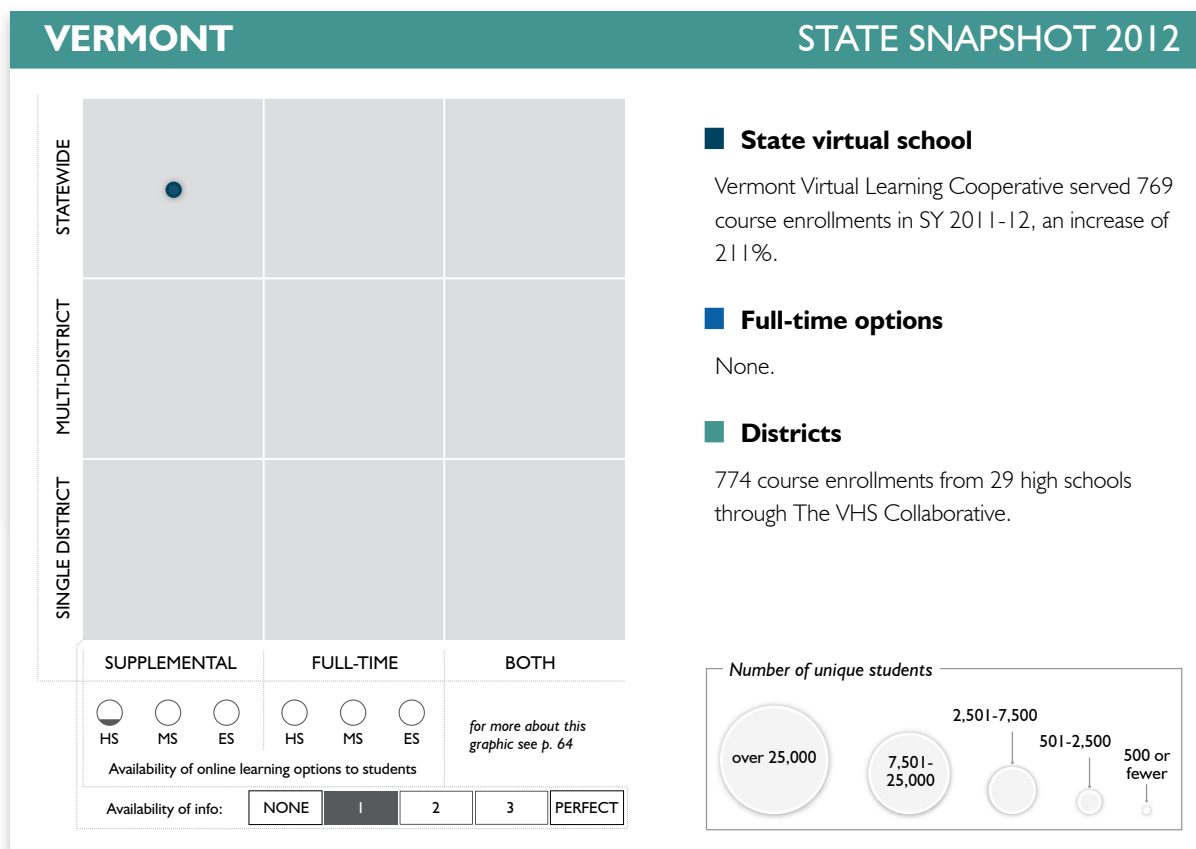
12, a 44% increase from the previous year. Two schools opened in SY 2011-12: Utah Connections Academy reported 279 enrollments and Alianza Academy, formerly Aspire Online Charter School, reported 468 enrollments. With the recent passage of SB65, virtual charters are authorized to offer supplemental courses to students statewide in addition to their full-time curriculum.

Multiple Utah districts are offering online programs or creating online schools to provide services to students across the state for a per-course fee set at the state level.³²⁷ Some online schools or programs are contracting with vendors such as Apex, K12 Inc., or Education2020 for curriculum and services, while others are creating their own curriculum. An extensive list of districts is available at www.kpk12.com/states/.

Brigham Young University (BYU) runs the BYU Independent Study program that is accredited by the Northwest Association of Accredited Schools (NAAS) and the Distance Education and Training Council (DETC). It allows credits earned through BYU Independent Study to transfer to other educational institutions outside of Utah that share NAAS accreditation. As of September 2012, the National Collegiate Athletic Association accepts online credits from some of BYU's high school courses.³²⁸

³²⁷ Approved providers; retrieved August 6, 2012, <http://www.schools.utah.gov/edonline/Students-and-Parents.aspx>

³²⁸ NCAA eligibility; retrieved September 6, 2012, <http://is.byu.edu/site/courses/ncaa.cfm>



Vermont started a state virtual school in 2010, the Vermont Virtual Learning Cooperative (VTVLC), which in 2011 partnered with 36 schools in Vermont (38% of the state's high schools). The VHS Collaborative also delivers online classes to 29 high schools (31%). Aside from the VTVLC and VHS, there are no major district online programs and no full-time online schools in the state.

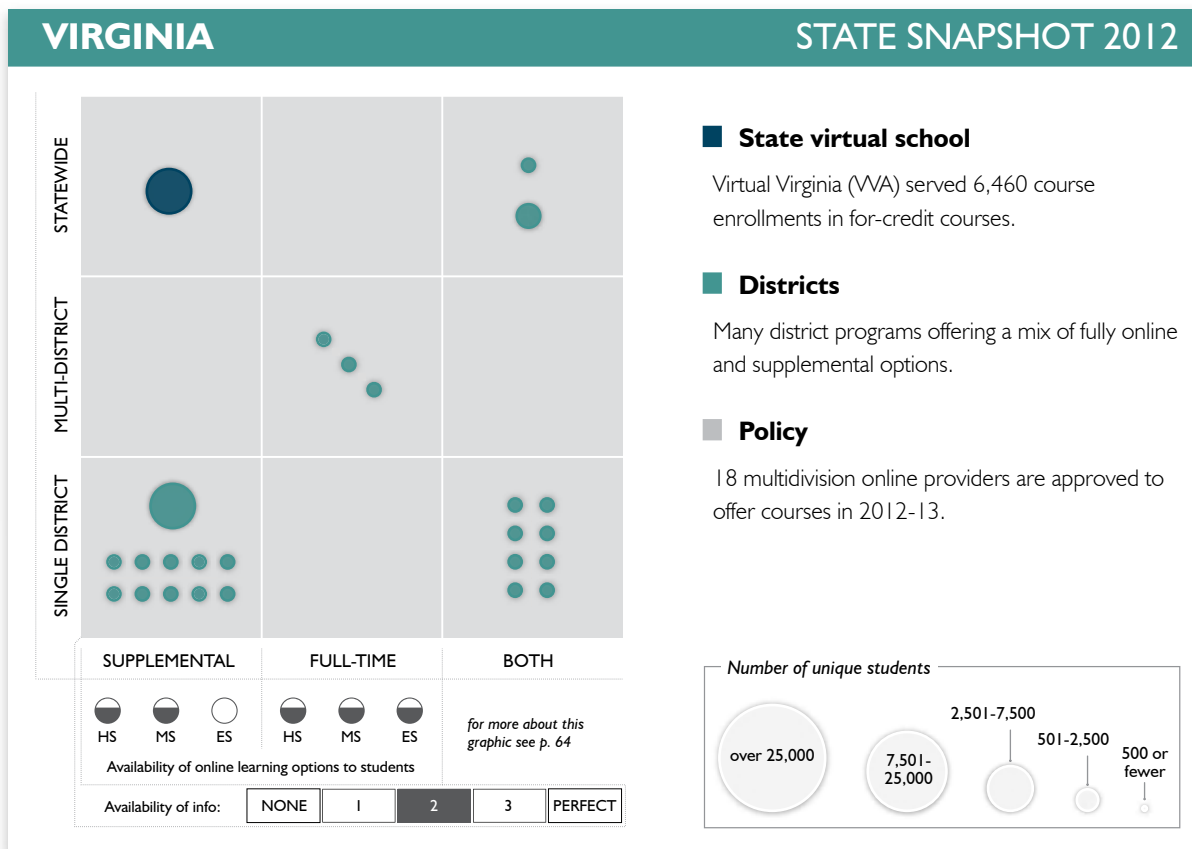
VTVLC is an American Recovery and Reinvestment Act/Title IID-funded initiative run by the Vermont Department of Education (VTDOE). It served 769 course enrollments in 80 courses in SY 2011-12, an increase of 211%. An additional 149 enrollments were served through a pre-readiness algebra pilot. The VTVLC received \$400,000 initially and \$235,000 for SY 2010-11, increasing to \$237,909 in SY 2011-12. VTVLC partner schools pay an annual fee of \$3,500 for the first teacher, and \$850 for additional teachers. For each teacher allocated by the partner school to facilitate a class through VTVLC, the school may enroll up to 25 students tuition-free. Non-partner schools (in- and out-of-state) and homeschooled students may access courses on a space-available basis for \$300 per half credit. The VTVLC is managed by River Valley Technical Center School District in partnership with the Springfield and Burlington school districts, Community College of Vermont, Marlboro College Graduate School, Florida Virtual School, Global Classroom, and Learning Network of Vermont.³²⁹

The VTVLC builds on several prior efforts. A 2008 report to the General Assembly by a VTDOE task force, Managed Statewide Network for Distance Learning, strongly supported the creation of a "Statewide Education Network" to improve equity of distribution and the cost effectiveness of broadband services to Vermont schools, provide a platform for growth of existing and new services, and maximize use of E-Rate funds.³³⁰ In April 2009, the State Board of Education adopted an education technology plan, "Learning with 21st Century Tools," which included the development of "flexible learning environments" and use of 21st century tools.³³¹

³²⁹ VTVLC; retrieved August 6, 2012, http://www.vtvlc.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=12&Itemid=61

³³⁰ Act 66; retrieved July 2, 2012, http://education.vermont.gov/new/pdfdoc/laws/legislative_reports/07/act_66_sec_21_distance_learning.pdf

³³¹ Learning with 21st Century Tools; retrieved July 2, 2012, http://education.vermont.gov/new/pdfdoc/pgm_edtech/state_plan/educ_edtech_plan_2012_part_1.pdf



Virginia has a state virtual school, Virtual Virginia; several district programs including those in Chesterfield, Fairfax, Prince William County, and York County; a 2010 law (SB738) that opened the door for multidivision providers to serve students in grades K-12 with both supplemental and full-time online programs; and a new online course graduation requirement that passed in 2012. However, due to ongoing funding issues, SB738 has not yet led to widespread growth in online learning in the state.

SB489/HB1061 (2012) states that beginning with the 9th grade class in 2013-14, the Virginia State Board of Education will modify graduation requirements to earn a standard or advanced studies diploma to include the “successful completion of one virtual course. The virtual course may be a noncredit-bearing course.”³³² HB578 (2012) requires the Board of Education to develop licensure requirements for online teachers, while stating that “Teachers who hold a five-year renewable license issued by the Board of Education may teach online courses for which they are properly endorsed.”³³³

SB738 (2010)³³⁴ allowed local school boards to contract³³⁵ with approved “multidivision online providers” to provide district online learning programs to grades K-12. Criteria for approving and monitoring multidivision online providers were approved by the Board of Education on November 18, 2010, and the first 13 providers were approved to begin offering courses for SY 2011-12.³³⁵ There are 18 providers approved for the 2012-13 school year: York County, Chesterfield County

³³² Chapter 642 22.1-253.13:4; retrieved September 12, 2012, <http://leg1.state.va.us/cgi-bin/legp504.exe?121+ful+CHAP0642>

³³³ HB578 (2012); retrieved September 12, 2012, <http://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?121+ful+HB578ER+pdf>

³³⁴ SB738 (2010); retrieved August 9, 2012, <http://leg1.state.va.us/cgi-bin/legp504.exe?101+sum+SB738>

³³⁵ Multidivision online provider approval process; retrieved August 9, 2012, http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/virtual_learning/virtual_schools/providers/application/index.shtml

Public Schools, and 16 commercial providers.³³⁶ The 2010 legislation defined “online course,” “virtual school program,” and “multidivision online provider” for the first time. A local school division program, or consortium of division online programs, does not qualify as a multidivision provider if “fewer than 10 per cent of the students enrolled reside outside the geographical boundaries of the school division.”

A student’s local education agency (LEA) must contract with each provider separately in order for a student to enroll in courses outside his or her district; this may or may not include an additional course-level approval process.

SB738 does not provide any additional funding for districts enrolling students for online courses, nor does the legislation establish a uniform per-student cost, per-course cost, or funding formula. Local school districts are free to negotiate contract prices with approved multidivision providers. The legislation states, “A student shall not be charged tuition for enrolling in any online course or virtual program offered by the school division in which he resides. ... However, tuition may be charged to students who do not reside within the geographic boundaries of the school division offering the course or program.”

Virtual Virginia (VVA), the state virtual school operated out of the VDOE, has offered online courses to students across the state since 2005. VVA reported 6,460 course enrollments in for-credit courses in 2011-12, up 2% from 2010-11.³³⁷ VVA funding is largely based on state appropriations. Appropriation funding dropped from \$3 million in 2009-10 to just over \$2 million in both 2010-11 and 2011-12. Honors courses, electives, and world language courses are free to Virginia public school students. A per-student, per-course fee ranging from \$75 to \$300 is charged to school districts for Advanced Placement® courses based upon the local composite index. Public school students who qualify as Early College Scholars may take AP courses free of charge. Over 64% of VVA’s enrollment is in AP courses.

Full-time online schools were authorized for the first time in Virginia with the passage of SB738 in 2010. K12 Inc. was one of the first providers to open a full-time online school, partnering with Carroll County, and then Buena Vista City Public Schools and King and Queen County School Districts; the three K12 Inc. schools served a total of 484 students in 2011-12. Virginia has a charter school law and several charter schools in operation; however, there are no full-time online charter schools. A partial list of online programs in Virginia is available at the *Keeping Pace* website.

In addition to the state virtual school, a significant number of supplemental district and regional online programs exist. One of the larger district programs is Fairfax Public Schools Online Campus, which reported 5,054 supplemental course enrollments in 2010-11.

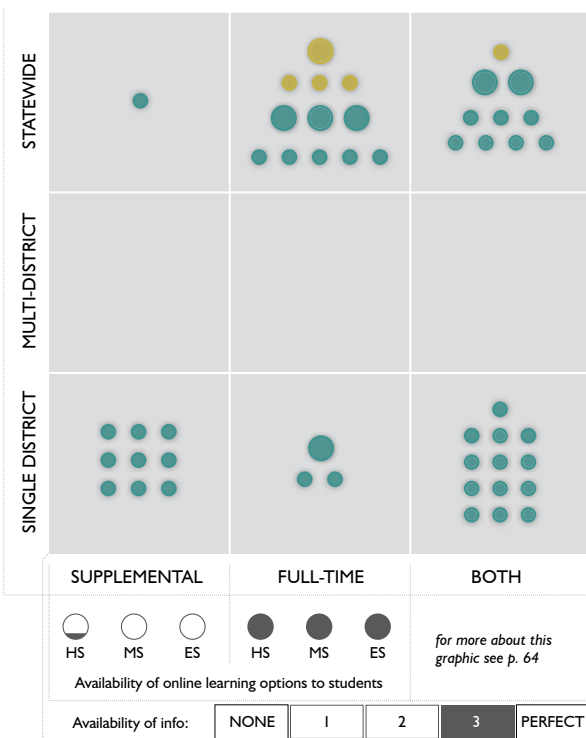
Distance learning courses are governed by the Virginia Standards of Accrediting Public Schools and SB738 (2012); details can be found at www.kpk12.com/states/.

³³⁶ Approved multidivision providers; retrieved August 9, 2012, https://p1pe.doe.virginia.gov/amop_public/

³³⁷ Personal communication with Virginia Department of Education; September 11, 2012

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Student numbers

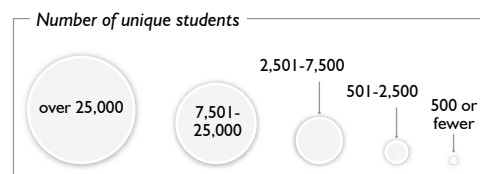
Digital Learning Department reported 18,649 full- and part-time unique students in 2010-11.

Districts

60 district-run programs, including 18 approved to operate statewide.

Policy

ESHB2065 modified WAC 392-121-182 by reducing the funding of alternative learning experiences (ALE) for students (the method through which most online programs operate), and modifying online provider approval beginning in 2013-14.



Washington has many full- and part-time online and blended learning options available for students, and reported 18,649 students enrolled in part- and full-time programs with 36 approved online providers in SY 2010-11. Most of the state-level activity is tied to administering policies that govern the online schools. Currently, the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction's (OSPI) Digital Learning Department (DLD) approves all multi-district providers in the state, and beginning in SY 2013-14, it also will approve single-district providers. There are a total of 36 providers approved to offer one or more options to students; these include 17 online course providers, 14 program providers, and 18 online school programs as of August 2012. Washington does not have a charter school law, so these programs represent a mix of districts, private providers, and consortia, some of which offer multiple options to students. Many districts partner with private online learning providers to operate online schools.

Engrossed Substitute House Bill (ESHB) 2065 (2011) modified funding for Alternative Learning Experience programs (ALE).³³⁸ An average 15% cut was administered to general apportionment for all ALE programs, unless an ALE program provided face-to-face teacher/student contact for each student for an average of one hour per week during each month the student is enrolled in the ALE program. An exception was allowed for online ALE programs, allowing for synchronous digital contact for students with learning plans that include only online courses. Programs that meet these contact-time requirements received a 10% cut to general apportionment.

HB2337 (2012) enables the superintendent of public instruction to coordinate and develop open educational resources for the state with a budget of \$200,000. The OER will be placed under an

³³⁸ ESHB2065 (2011); retrieved August 15, 2012, <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/documents/billdocs/2011-12/Pdf/Bills/Session%20Laws/House/2065-S.SL.pdf>

attribution license, registered by a nonprofit organization with domain expertise in OER, and made available to schools statewide.³³⁹

Online programs

Extensive information about each approved provider is available on the DLD website, including OSPI approval, teacher-student ratio, course-completion rate, and course-pass rate.³⁴⁰

State-level reporting is improving each year with increased access to the state's student information system (CEDARS) and other data sources. Although data are only available for the 2010-11 school year, the depth and breadth of information provide a useful picture of online learning activity in the state (see Table 11). For the third year, the DLD released an Online Learning Annual Report; the January 2012 report analyzes data from SY 2010-11.³⁴¹ With this report, Washington offers one of best examples of online student data reporting and analysis in the country. The report noted:

- As of fall 2011, there were 60 online school programs in 55 districts (this includes single-district programs that are not included in the numbers above because they need not seek DLD approval).
- 146 schools in 89 districts reported online course enrollments, representing 68% and 51% increases, respectively.
- 18,649 students took at least one online course in 2010-11, a 17% increase from 2009-10.³⁴²
- Students registered for 72,180 courses in 2010-11, a 26% increase.
- High school students make up 77% of the online student population.
- “Students in online school programs meet standards on assessments at a lower rate than the state average. In some subject areas, such as reading (3.3% gap) and writing (8.6% gap), the difference is relatively small. But, in other areas, the gap is significant: online students taking the science assessment met standard 15.9% lower than the state average; online students taking the math measurements of student progress (MSP) met standard at a rate 19.2% lower; and students in the math end-of-course exam were 22.2% lower.”
- “A total of 49.6% of online students had a year-end status that indicated a successful outcome, such as graduation or completion of an individualized education program. ... This is significantly lower than the 69.1% of non-online students in those same categories.”
- 89 schools enrolled 888 students in 1,906 courses directly through the DLD course catalog.
 - Of those, 86% were paid for by the school. If the course is taken as a part of the student's basic education, then the school must pay for the course.

³³⁹ HB2337 (2012); retrieved August 15, 2012, <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/documents/billdocs/2011-12/Pdf/Bills/Session%20Laws/House/2337-S2.SL.pdf>

³⁴⁰ Approved providers; retrieved August 15, 2012, <http://digitalllearning.k12.wa.us/approval/providers>

³⁴¹ Online Learning Annual Report 2010-11; retrieved August 15, 2012, http://digitalllearning.k12.wa.us/about/reports/Online_Learning_Annual_Report_2010-11.pdf. Washington is not yet able to report 2011-12 enrollment data; it will be posted at www.kpk12.com/states/ when available.

³⁴² The number of unique students participating in online learning was lower in *Keeping Pace 2011*.

	Number of students	Completed courses	Completion rate	Pass rate (D or greater)
Students taking fewer than 5 courses	7,769	10,497	79%	80%
Students taking 5–10 courses	3,800	23,407	74%	65%
Students taking more than 10 courses	2,515	19,045	86%	77%
TOTAL	14,084	52,949		

Table 11: Enrollment information from Washington’s Online Learning Annual Report, 2010-11

State policies

Washington’s online learning policies are found in RCW: 28A.250.³⁴³ SSB5410 created the DLD within the OSPI and developed initial approval and reporting requirements. Reporting standards included in RCW 28A.250.040 requiring districts to designate online courses came into effect with SY 2010–11. In addition, districts must accept all course credits that meet district graduation requirements and are earned from approved providers.

All online programs must be reviewed and approved by the DLD; this will include single-district programs with SY 2013-14. The DLD also directly offers online courses from approved course providers to districts. All providers, including those that were grandfathered into approved status when the process changed in 2011, have been reviewed and approved.³⁴⁴

All school district boards of directors were required to pass a policy and set of procedures regarding online learning by August 31, 2010. In these documents, each district addressed student eligibility criteria, the types of online courses available to students through the school district, the methods districts will use to support student success, and when the school district will and will not pay course fees and other costs, among other topics. Districts are also required to provide students with information on their online learning options.

Funding

ESHB2065 modified WAC 392-121-182 by changing the funding of alternative learning experiences (ALE) for students (the method through which most online programs operate). It also included new ALE definitions, restrictions on purchasing, and a prohibition against compensating staff as an incentive to increase ALE enrollments.³⁴⁵ OSPI filed an emergency rule adoption (CR-103E)³⁴⁶ in an effort to implement ESB2065 quickly.

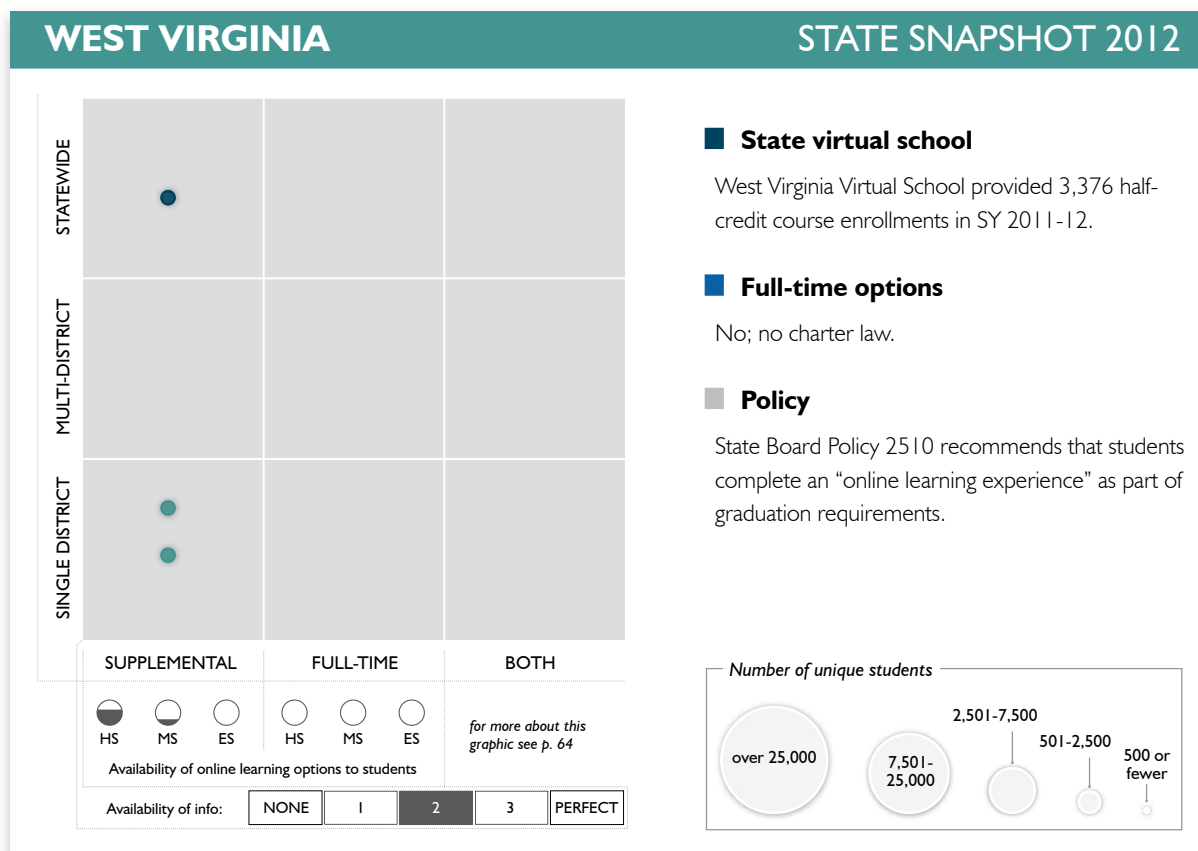
Beginning with the 2013-14 school year, school districts may claim state funding, to the extent otherwise allowed by state law, for students enrolled in online courses or programs only if the online courses or programs are offered by an OSPI-approved online provider. School districts also can claim funding for online students using either the ALE or basic education funding rules, depending on the circumstances. Funding varies by district regardless of whether the student is enrolled online or in an on-ground school.

³⁴³ RCW 28A.250; retrieved September 11, 2012, <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=28A.250>

³⁴⁴ RCW 28A.250.020, Multidistrict provider approval process; retrieved August 15, 2012, <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=28A.250.020>

³⁴⁵ Permanent ALE Rules Filed–August 22, 2011; retrieved August 15, 2012, <http://digitallearning.k12.wa.us/ale/>

³⁴⁶ CR-103E, Emergency rule adoption amending WAC 392-121-182; retrieved August 15, 2012, <http://digitallearning.k12.wa.us/ale/OTS-4098.1final.pdf>



Most of the online education activity in West Virginia is through the West Virginia Virtual School (WVVS), the state virtual school that mostly serves students in grades 6-12, but is authorized to approve courses for any student regardless of grade level. Created by statute in 2000, WVVS is housed within the West Virginia Department of Education and is governed by statute and State Board Policy 2450.³⁴⁷ It offers about 270 courses via third-party providers, which supply most courses or work with WVVS to develop courses.

The WVVS budget, \$650,000 for SY 2011-12, pays student tuition for fully online courses on a first-come, first-served basis. If more than 10 students from one school enroll in a course, the school must pay \$200 per additional student; however, all course enrollment fees during the school year (other than summer school) were paid by the state in SY 2011-12. WVVS had 4,490 half-credit enrollments in 2011-12, including 1,114 that were credit recovery courses through the onTargetWV credit recovery program; this was a 32% increase over SY 2010-11.

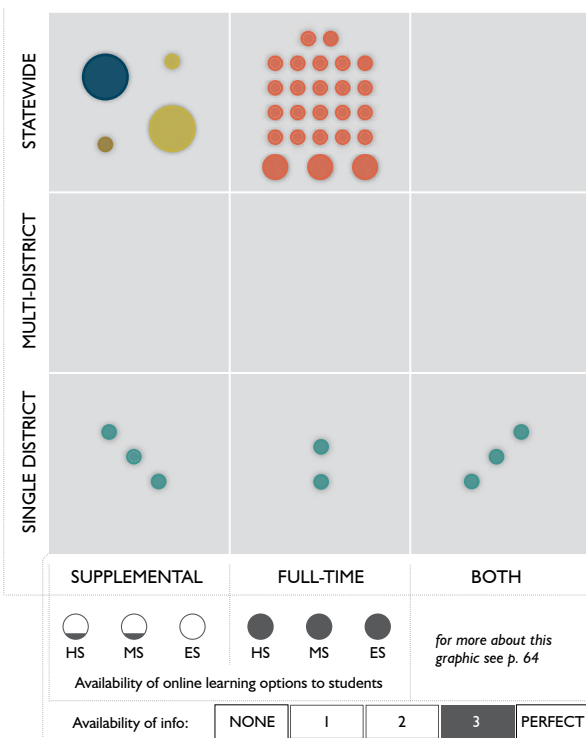
In addition to its fully online courses, WVVS provides a blended course for Spanish 1A and 1B for students in 7th and 8th grades, and Spanish I and II for high school students. Eight highly qualified world language (Spanish) teachers are employed by WVVS to provide a blended model of Spanish instruction to students in over 70 schools without world language teachers.

There are no other major online programs or initiatives in West Virginia, although some districts such as Kanawha County and Harrison County have online programs. West Virginia does not have a charter school law.

³⁴⁷ Title 126, Legislative Rule, State Board of Education, Series 48, Distance Learning and the West Virginia Virtual School (2450); retrieved July 2, 2012, <http://wvde.state.wv.us/policies/p2450.html>

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■ Full-time options

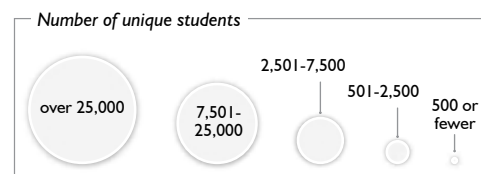
25 virtual charters served 4,482 students in SY 2011-12, a 4% increase.

■ State virtual school

Wisconsin Virtual School served 5,151 course enrollments in 2011-12, an increase of 52%.

■ Statewide Consortium

Wisconsin eSchool Network is a consortium of 16 partnering school districts; it served 5,173 course enrollments in SY 2011-12, a 5% increase over the previous year.



Wisconsin has a variety of schools and programs that provide full-time and supplemental online learning options to students across the state. The Department of Public Instruction (DPI) lists several supplemental online programs,³⁴⁸ including Wisconsin Web Academy and Wisconsin eSchool Network, as well as 28 virtual charter schools authorized to operate³⁴⁹ in 2012-13.³⁵⁰ In SY 2011-12, 25 online charter schools served 4,482 students. Wisconsin is one of very few states to require in statute that teachers must complete at least 30 hours of “professional development designed to prepare a teacher for online teaching” prior to teaching an online course in a public school, including a charter school.³⁵¹

Wisconsin Virtual School (WVS) is the state virtual school, created through a partnership between the DPI and Cooperative Educational Service Agency (CESA).³⁵² WVS offers courses for students in grades 6-12 and had 5,151 course enrollments in SY 2011-12, an increase of 52% from the previous year. It served students in 217 of Wisconsin’s 426 school districts in SY 2011-12. WVS has an annual budget of more than \$1.1 million and is funded largely through course fees; both middle and high school courses cost \$325 per semester course.

³⁴⁸ The Wisconsin Center for Academically Talented Youth, the third program recognized by the DPI, is a group of district co-ops that “combine online instruction and face-to-face workshops to allow academically talented students from throughout a region or across a school district to learn together,” retrieved June 20, 2011, <http://about.wcatyweb.com/>

³⁴⁹ Not all authorized online charters may choose to operate in a given year.

³⁵⁰ Department of Public Instruction listed 28 virtual charter schools as of August 2012; the list is subject to change; retrieved August 13, 2012, <http://dpi.wi.gov/sms/pstoc.html>

³⁵¹ Wisconsin State Statute 118.19 (13); retrieved September 12, 2012, <https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/statutes/statutes/118/19/13>

³⁵² Act 222; retrieved June 19, 2011, <http://www.legis.state.wi.us/2007/data/acts/07act222.pdf>

The Wisconsin eSchool Network (WEN) is a consortium of 16 partnering school districts, eight of which are among the 11 largest districts in the state. WEN served 5,173 course enrollments in SY 2011-12, a 5% increase over the previous year. WEN was formally established as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization in 2012.

WVS and WEN signed an MOU with the DPI in 2012 to operate under the umbrella of the Wisconsin Digital Learning Collaborative³⁵³ and meet the statutory requirement of the Wisconsin Web Academy.³⁵⁴ The collaboration will expand the offerings of the Web Academy and provide a single point of access to online courses and blended learning options, although both organizations will continue to operate autonomously for SY 2012-13.

In June 2011, the cap on student enrollments in full-time online charter schools that had been in place since 2008 was removed as part of state budget bill AB40.³⁵⁵ Twenty-five virtual charters enrolled 4,482 students in SY 2011-12, an increase of 4% from the previous year, even though the number of virtual charters increased from 14 to 25. There are 28 virtual charters authorized to operate in SY 2012-13.

The only policy change affecting online charter schools in 2011-12 is a revision to the rules governing the Open Enrollment Program³⁵⁶ for students enrolling in online charter schools.³⁵⁷ The revisions clarify Program definitions, expand the open enrollment period from three weeks to three months (“between the first Monday in February and the last weekday in April”), and provide alternatives for students failing to apply within the prescribed timeline. Previous policy changes are available at www.kpk12.com/states/.

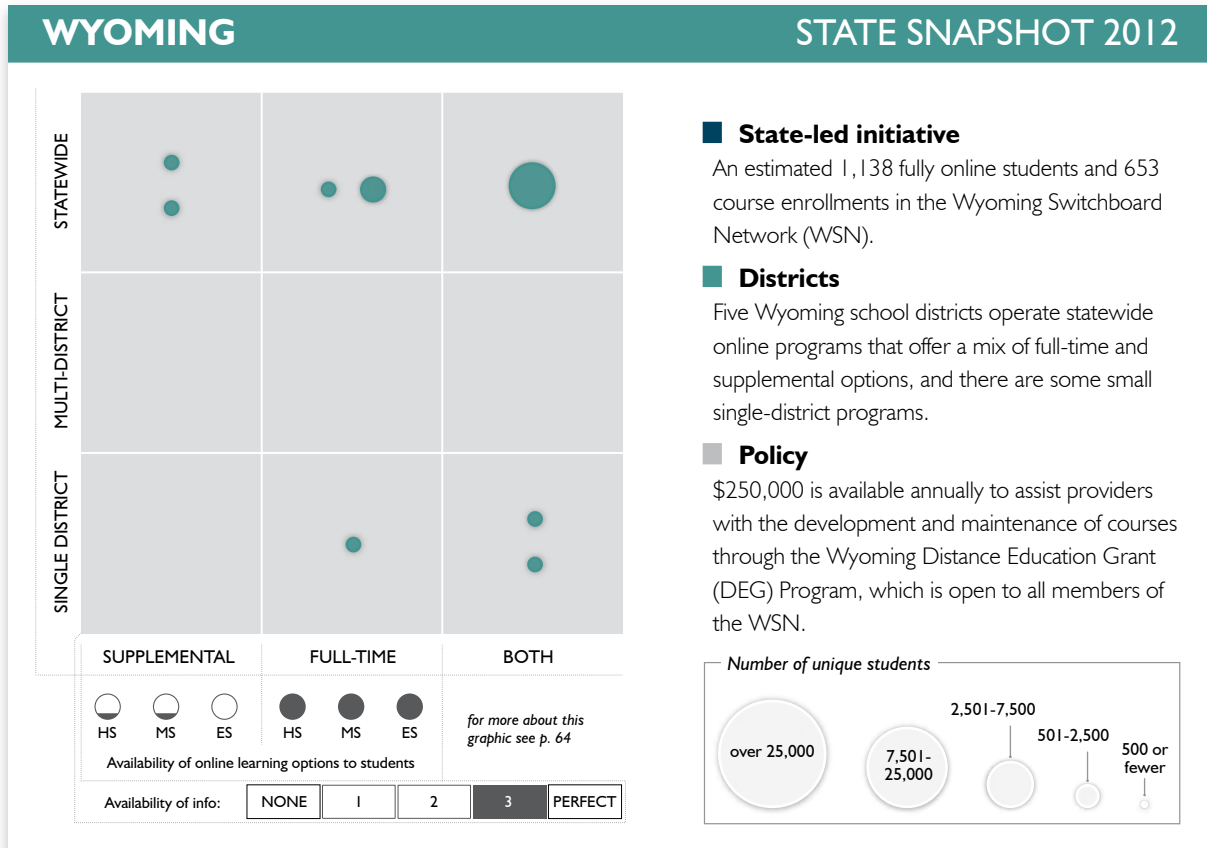
³⁵³ Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, press release; retrieved September 3, 2012, http://dpi.wi.gov/eis/pdf/dpinr2012_87.pdf

³⁵⁴ WVS has been considered Wisconsin’s Web Academy as established by Act 222 (2008); retrieved August 16, 2012, <http://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/2007/related/acts/222.pdf>

³⁵⁵ Wisconsin AB40, “SECTION 2507. 118.40 (8) (h) of the statutes is repealed,” section 2507 on p. 377; retrieved August 20, 2012, <http://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/2011/related/proposals/ab40>. Although other 2011 legislative initiatives proposed a removal of the cap on virtual charter school enrollments, it was the state budget bill (AB40) that repealed the cap.

³⁵⁶ The Open Enrollment Program was a provision of Act 114 (2011); retrieved August 20, 2012, <http://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/2011/related/acts/114>

³⁵⁷ Wisconsin Association of School Boards memorandum, February 2012; retrieved July 23, 2012, <http://www.wasb.org/websites/legal/File/new-laws/NL2011114-errata.pdf>



Most online learning activity in Wyoming is via the Wyoming Switchboard Network (WSN), a collection of distance education (DE) providers that delivers coursework to K-12 students. The Wyoming Department of Education (WDE) established the WSN in 2008-09 in response to SB0070³⁵⁸ and based on recommendations from the Wyoming K-12 Distance Education Task Force, which convened in 2007. Statewide, the WDE estimates there were 1,138 fully online students in SY 2011-12, an increase of 18%, and 653 course enrollments, a decrease of 27%, (see Table 12).³⁵⁹ A total of 1,489 unique students participated in full- and part-time programs in Wyoming in SY 2011-12, an increase of 1%.

In addition to the WSN, five Wyoming school districts operate statewide online programs. Fremont County's Wyoming "e" Academy of Virtual Education (WeAVE) offers a full-time curriculum to in-district students and supplemental courses to high school students statewide. Campbell County Virtual School serves students full time in grades K-6; Evanston Virtual High School offers supplemental high school courses; Wyoming Connections Academy (formerly the Jackson Hole Connections Academy) offers both full-time and supplemental course options to K-12 students; and the Wyoming Virtual Academy (Niobra County) offers a full-time K-12 program and supplemental curricula to students in grades 9-12.

With its annual report³⁶⁰ to the legislature, Wyoming is one of the few states able to cross-reference state assessment and course completion data with a student's DE provider, provided that sufficient data is available to protect student anonymity. WSN reported the following details about DE enrollments for SY 2010-11:

- 31 of 61 school districts enrolled students into DE courses.

³⁵⁸ SB0070 (2008); retrieved August 16, 2012, <http://legisweb.state.wy.us/2008/Bills/SF0070.pdf>

³⁵⁹ Personal communication with Scott Bullock, WDE; September 7, 2012. Numbers given are estimates.

³⁶⁰ 2010-2011 Summary Report of K-12 Distance Education in Wyoming, released February 2012; retrieved August 16, 2012, <http://www.wyomingswitchboard.net/Docs/2010-2011WyoDE.pdf>

- Six postsecondary institutions provided 406 dual enrollment courses, a 36% increase, to 231 students.
- 57% of DE students were in grades 9-12, and most took supplemental courses; 20% were in grades 6-8 and mostly full-time students; 23% were K-5 students, all of whom were full-time students.

The Wyoming Switchboard's website acts as the central repository of distance education resources. The site provides access to curriculum mapping for over 600 DE courses available statewide, detailed information about the various DE program providers, and Wyoming's key policy documents and DE information.

Unique students	Grades K-6			Grades 7-9			Grades 10-12			Total		
	2010-11	2011-12	Growth	2010-11	2011-12	Growth	2010-11	2011-12	Growth	2010-11	2011-12	Growth
Full-time	417	501	+20%	314	342	+9%	233	295	+27%	964	1,138	+18%
Supplemental	1	1	0%	44	53	+20%	467	297	-36%	512	351	-31%
TOTAL	418	205	+20%	358	395	+10%	700	592	-15%	1,476	1,489	+1%

Course enrollments	Grades K-6			Grades 7-9			Grades 10-12			Total		
	2010-11	2011-12	Growth	2010-11	2011-12	Growth	2010-11	2011-12	Growth	2010-11	2011-12	Growth
Full-time	2,836	4,038	+42%	2,386	3,191	+34%	2,358	3,737	+58%	7,580	10,966	+45%
Supplemental	4	7	+75%	72	82	+14%	824	564	-32%	900	653	-27%
TOTAL	2,840	4,045	+42%	2,458	3,273	+33%	3,182	4,301	+35%	8,480	11,619	+37%

Table 12: Wyoming online student and enrollment estimates in the WSN for 2011-12

State policies

During the 2008-09 school year, the WDE promulgated the Chapter 41 Rules and Regulations that govern the processes and procedures of DE within the state.³⁶¹ Wyoming Statute 21-2-202(a) (xxxi)³⁶² charged the WDE with establishing a state network of DE courses that meet state standards for course content and delivery by Wyoming-certified teachers. The WDE must also provide training and technical assistance to school districts for the delivery of DE; monitor the design, content, delivery, and accreditation of DE programs provided by school districts; and establish criteria and necessary components of individual student distance learning plans. Finally, the WDE must implement a reporting process to meet federal and state funding requirements, and establish necessary data collection instruments and systems to monitor and improve DE programs statewide. Per Wyoming Statute 21-13-330, local districts where the students reside have a variety of responsibilities including completing a distance learning plan for each student, monitoring progress, supporting the student, and ensuring students are enrolled in programs approved by the WDE.

Wyoming Statute 21-13-330 and the Chapter 41 Distance Education Rules also established policies for funding DE course enrollments. The statute allows school districts to include DE courses in their ADM calculations, and to make an agreement to release students to participate full-time in DE in a non-resident district. The Wyoming Distance Education Grant Program makes up to \$250,000 in total funding available to assist DE providers with development and maintenance of courses.³⁶³

The WSN Resident District Handbook³⁶⁴ is a guide for K-12 DE in Wyoming. Additional information about Wyoming policies, particularly around governance, tracking, and funding as well as local district policies is available at www.kpk12.com/states/.

³⁶¹ Chapter 41 Distance Education Rules; retrieved August 16, 2012, <http://sos.wy.state.wy.us/Rules/RULES/7334.pdf>

³⁶² Chapter 21, 21-2-202 and 21-13-330; retrieved September 8, 2012, <http://legisweb.state.wy.us/statutes/statutes.aspx?file=titles/Title21/Title21.htm>

³⁶³ Wyoming Distance Education Grant; retrieved August 16, 2012, <http://edu.wyoming.gov/programs/grants.aspx>

³⁶⁴ WSN Resident District Handbook; retrieved August 16, 2012, <http://wyomingswitchboard.net/Docs/WSNRDHB.pdf>

Appendix A: Methodology

The information found in *Keeping Pace 2012* came from a combination of Internet research, emails, and phone interviews with personnel from state education agencies, state virtual schools, online programs, and other sources.

For state profiles, research and reviews of state laws were combined with phone interviews and emails. For states with little new activity in 2012, in many cases personnel reviewed and made minor changes to state profiles presented in *Keeping Pace 2011*, sometimes moving historical information to the individual state profiles on the *Keeping Pace* website at www.kpk12.com/states/. In most cases, the state education agency or other knowledgeable individuals reviewed the final version of the profile for accuracy. In a field that is growing and changing as rapidly as online education, timeliness of information is imperative, and indeed timeliness has been one of the drivers of interest in *Keeping Pace*. Research for this year's report was conducted from May through mid-September of 2012, and every effort has been made to ensure currency of information as of September 25, 2012.

Enrollment data was collected from a variety of sources. The preferred source is a state department of education reporting website. However, some states do not publish enrollment data, in some states the data are not yet available for SY 2011-12, or online programs may not have to report online or blended enrollments specifically to the state. In those instances, enrollment data was typically collected via personal communication with a program or state education agency leader. Enrollment data are reported for summer 2011, fall 2011, and spring 2012, often combined into one number that we call school year (SY) 2011-12.

In addition to the methods discussed above, the sponsoring organizations for *Keeping Pace* provided extensive expertise and knowledge of the state of online learning across the country. This report would not be possible without their thoughtful contributions, and expertise. Any errors or omissions, however, are fully the responsibility of the Evergreen Education Group.

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