Fast Facts About Online Learning

The International Association for K-12 Online Learning (*i*NACOL) is a non-profit 501(c)(3) membership association based in the Washington, DC area with more than 4,000 members. We are unique; our members represent a diverse cross-section of K-12 education from school districts, charter schools, state education agencies, non-profit organizations, research institutions, corporate entities and other content and technology providers.

*i*NACOL's mission is to ensure all students have access to world-class education and quality online learning opportunities that prepare them for a lifetime of success.

*i*NACOL facilitates advocacy, research, professional development and networking to expand the availability and enhance the quality of K-12 online learning.

Online learning is a powerful innovation that expands education opportunities. *i*NACOL supports access to high-quality online learning for all students.
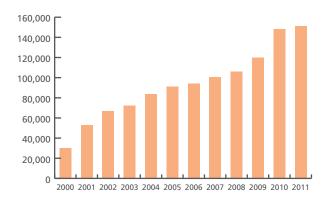
*i*NACOL hosts the annual Virtual School Symposium, the premier K-12 online and blended learning conference. The 2012 conference will be in **New Orleans, October 21-24, 2012**. For more information: **vss.inacol.org**.
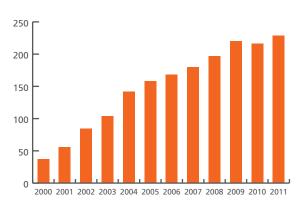
Key K-12 Online Learning Stats

- 40 states have state virtual schools or state-led initiatives.[1]

- 30 states, as well as Washington, DC, have statewide full-time online schools.[1]

- There were an estimated 1,816,400 enrollments in distance-education courses in K-12 school districts in 2009 – 2010, almost all of which were online courses. 74% of these enrollments were in high schools.[2]

- This estimate does not include students enrolled in most full-time online schools which were approximately 200,000 students in 2009-2010 and 250,000 students in 2010 – 2011.[1]

- These figures represent phenomenal growth as a decade ago, it was estimated there were 40,000-50,000 enrollments in K-12 online education.[3]

- The top reasons why school districts make online learning opportunities available to their students is to provide course not otherwise available at their schools, and providing opportunities for students to recover course credits from classes missed or failed. Credit recovery is especially important for urban schools with 81% of such schools indicating this is a very important reason.[2]

- The College Board estimated that in 2010 only 33.7% of school districts offered AP® or IB courses in English, math, social studies, and science.[4]

- The types of online courses with the highest enrollments in school districts are credit recovery and dual-credit.[2]

- The most common provider of supplemental online courses to school districts are universities. 75% of districts offering online learning options for their students indicate that all courses were developed by an organization other than the school district. For districts larger than 10,000 students, this drops to 63%.[2]

- 74% of school districts with distance education programs planned to expand online offerings over the next 3 years.[2]

- The most common location for students accessing their online course is their school, with 92% of students accessing courses from school and only 78% of students accessing courses from home.[2]

Full-Time Online Charter School Enrollments

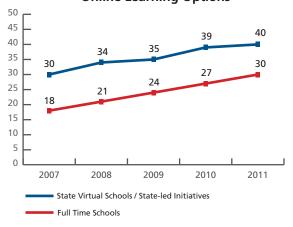Center for Education Reform Data, January 2012

Full-Time Online Charter Schools

Center for Education Reform Data, January 2012

Number of States with Statewide Online Learning Options

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
State Virtual Schools / State-led Initiatives	30	34	35	39	40
Full Time Schools	18	21	24	27	30

— State Virtual Schools / State-led Initiatives
— Full Time Schools

Keeping Pace, 2007 – 2011

Key K-12 Online Policy Statements

■ As of late 2011, no state has a full suite of full-time and supplemental online course options for students at all grade levels.[1]

■ Florida, Minnesota, Idaho, and Wisconsin stand-out as states with a wide variety of full-time and supplemental options for students across most grade levels.

■ In April 2006, Michigan became the first state to require online learning for high school graduation. Since that time Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Virginia, and West Virginia have added requirements.

■ The current U.S. average per pupil expenditures for a fully-online model is $6,400 and for a blended-learning model is $8,900. Traditional school models have an average per pupil expenditure of $10,000.[5]

■ 45 states and the District of Columbia have adopted the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) representing an historic shift in this country to emphasize higher-order skills and the application of knowledge so that all students are challenged to higher levels, are prepared to be successful in a global, knowledge economy. This states-led work has changed the conversation about the country's expectations for all students and the education system itself toward attainment of globally-competitive, world-class knowledge and skills.[6]

■ With rising costs and cash-strapped budgets, the shelf life of a typical textbook is being stretched even longer. Open Educational Resources (OER) create a pathway to deliver engaging, customized, and up-to-date content to students much faster and more cost effectively than today.[7]

References

1 Watson, J., et. al. (2011). Keeping Pace with K-12 Online Learning: An Annual Review of Policy and Practice. Evergreen Education Group. http://kpk12.com/cms/wp-content/uploads/KeepingPace2011.pdf.

2 Queen, B., and Lewis, L. (2011). Distance Education Courses for Public Elementary and Secondary School Students: 2009-10 (NCES 2012-009). U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2012/2012008.pdf.

3 Clark, T. (2001). Virtual Schools: Trends and Issues. WestEd. http://www.wested.org/online_pubs/virtualschools.pdf.

4 Lee, Jr., M., et. al. (2011). The College Completion Agenda 2011 Progress Report. College Board Advocacy and Policy Center. http://completionagenda.collegeboard.org/sites/default/files/reports_pdf/Progress_Report_2011.pdf.

5 Battaglino, T., Haldeman, M., and Laurans, E. (2011). The Costs of Online Learning. The Thomas Fordham Institute. http://www.edexcellencemedia.net/publications/2012/20120110-the-costs-of-online-learning/20120110-the-costs-of-online-learning.pdf.

6 Council of Chief State School Officers. (2012). CCSSO Innovation Lab Network College and Career-Readiness Task Force, January 23, 2012.

7 http://learningbeyondtextbooks.org.

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iNACOL has identified the following as the top federal policy issues:

1 *Enable accountability from the student-level up through individual student growth models that support student-centered, competency-based learning.*

2 *Create new systems of assessments that support student-centered, personalized, competency-based learning. This includes formative, embedded, performance-based, and validating assessments.*

3 *Support a research agenda for high quality online learning.*

4 *Support human capital development through redesigned 21st century pre-service/in-service training for online and blended learning.*

5 *Ensure reliable and ubiquitous student access to the Internet.*

States take a variety of approaches when it comes to the funding of online learning, in part reflecting the diversity of education funding in general.

In states where full-time online learning is permitted, funding is generally based on the number of students enrolled.

- In Arizona, full-time online schools receive 95% of the base support-level.

- Colorado funds full-time online schools at a state-set, per pupil minimum level for online students.

- Florida full-time online schools receive funding for students based on successful completion.

- In Indiana, funding for full-time online schools receive 87.5% of the typical funding level plus any special education grants which are calculated the same as for traditional schools.

- Louisiana online schools receive 90% of the state and local funding based on where the student resides.

- Nevada virtual schools receive the same level of funding as brick-and-mortar schools.

- Funding varies in Pennsylvania because sending districts pay the receiving charter schools the budgeted total expenditures (state and local) per average daily membership minus the cost of several programs not accounted for in charters — an amount that is between 70-82% of the total state and local expenditure per student for a school district.

- Michigan full-time charter schools receive the same funding as other charter schools in the state.

- Minnesota funds full-time online learning the same as if the students were taking all of their courses in a physical classroom.

- While Ohio full-time online schools are funded at the same state per-pupil funding formula as traditional schools, they do not receive local funds resulting in significantly lower total funding levels.

Most state virtual schools are funded with a fixed yearly appropriation, with some state virtual schools also charging enrollment fees. As a result, these programs are only able to serve a limited number of students. In Florida, Idaho, and North Carolina state virtual schools are funded in a scalable manner based on the number of course enrollments provided.

Funding following the student at the individual course level exists in a few states: including Florida, Minnesota, and Utah.

- In Florida, the Florida Virtual School receives a fixed-amount for each successful semester course enrollment and the school district's funding is reduced for that course enrollment.

- In Minnesota, each semester course enrollment is calculated at 1/12 of the total per pupil funding. The receiving district receives 88% of this funding and the local district keeps 12% for overhead.

- In Utah funding also follows the student at the high school level with successful course completion also impacting the funding. The providing district receives 50% of the funding up front and the remaining 50% upon the student earning course credit.

*i*NACOL Strategic Priorities

1   Advocacy

Advocate for state and federal policy frameworks that further the development of online, blended, and competency-based pathways.

*i*NACOL is developing state and federal policy frameworks defining how policies can evolve to enable online, blended, and competency-based pathways to thrive. We are advocating for a multi-stage evolution of policy that goes beyond just increasing access to online and blended learning towards the goal of tying access and funding to performance — beginning, for example, by requiring that models meet output standards and ultimately requiring that models be rewarded for demonstrations of proficiency and proficiency gain.

2   Quality

In partnership with leading providers of online and blended models, establish a set of outcomes-based quality assurance standards and reporting expectations designed to make it transparent when courses and content are effective in improving student outcomes.

*i*NACOL's future work in quality will be to establish quality assurance standards and reporting practices that use student outcomes as the measure of effectiveness. While the policy evolution outlined in the first strategic priority will ultimately create the incentives necessary to ensure that only effective models are available to students, it is essential that the field build its ability to meet this expectation. Outcomes-based quality assurance standards will establish an expectation within the field that "quality" courses are those that improve student outcomes.

3   New Learning Models

Through research, knowledge-sharing and advocacy, spur development of blended, online, and competency-based models that will be effective in supporting college and career-readiness for all students.

*i*NACOL wants to accelerate the development of effective new learning models that are necessary for the field to achieve its potential. Online and blended learning models are at an early stage of development, and many important questions require further research and development. Answering these questions will require that stakeholders across the field share an ambitious vision of online and blended learning's potential, understand where the field is today relative to that potential, and innovate rapidly and in collaboration with one another on critical open questions.

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*i*NACOL Events

Virtual School Symposium: The Premier K-12 Online and Blended Learning Conference
October 21-24, 2012 in New Orleans

Leadership Webinar Series
second Wednesday of every month at 2:00PM ET

Teacher Talk Series
third Thursday of every month at 6:00PM ET

For more information
www.inacol.org/events

*i*NACOL Resources

Education Domain Blog
susanpatrick.inacol.org

_i_NACOL Online Bookstore
www.inacol.org/research/bookstore

_i_NACOL Quality Standards
www.inacol/org/research/nationalstandards

How to Start an Online Learning Program
www.onlineprogramhowto.org

Continuity of Learning Resources
www.inacol.org/col

Competency-Based Pathways Wiki
sites.google.com/site/competencybasedpathway

*i*NACOL Services

State Needs Assessment for Online Courses and Services

Online Course Review and Evaluation

For more information contact us:
www.inacol.org/contact

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