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KEEPING PACE WITH K-12 DIGITAL LEARNING

An Annual Review of Policy and Practice

Research and writing by

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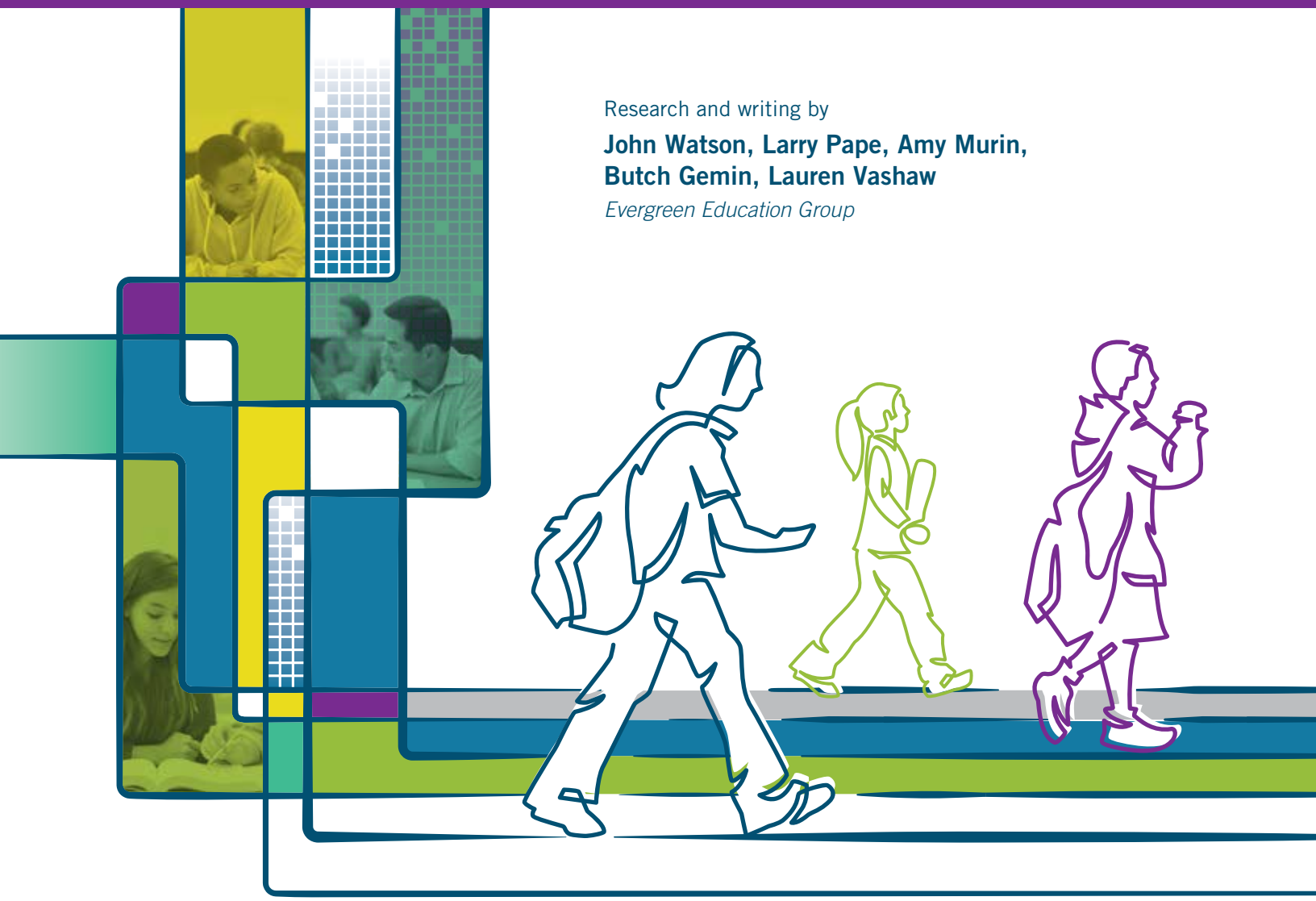
Evergreen Education Group



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Acknowledgments

This is the 11th annual *Keeping Pace* report. Although the digital learning world has changed markedly in 11 years, one thing that hasn't changed is that we continue to receive extraordinary support from sponsors, educators, education agencies, and others. We are incredibly grateful to all of these people and organizations, and everyone who has helped along the way.

As *Keeping Pace* 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.

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 digital learning and 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* also benefits from a group of advisors who gave their time and expertise freely, and we deeply appreciate their insights and assistance. *Keeping Pace* sponsors, and the report's advisory board, are listed below.

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Executive Summary

Keeping Pace with K–12 Digital Learning is the title of this year's report. *Digital learning* is replacing the previous reference to *online and blended learning*. This seemingly small word change signifies a significant evolution in the landscape, and a major change in the way we are analyzing and reporting on it. A bit of history should be helpful in understanding our original focus, and our reason for change.

Keeping Pace with Online Learning was first published in 2004. We chose to focus on the young and disruptive K–12 teacher-led online learning segment, and not the broader education technology segment. At that time, K–12 teacher-led online courses were almost exclusively provided by state-supported virtual schools delivering supplemental online courses, and charter schools where students took all of their courses online. A small but growing number of school districts were also beginning to establish full-time online programs accessible to students regionally and across individual states.

In subsequent years two key changes happened. First, an ever-increasing amount of online learning activity developed inside individual schools and districts, as an ever-increasing number of students were taking online courses from within their own districts instead of from state virtual schools and virtual charter schools. Concurrently, a second shift was taking place. Schools were beginning to combine an online or digital content component with regular face-to-face classroom instruction in new and unique ways. In many cases, the classroom configuration and the bell schedule were unchanged. In some cases, the instructional approach and learning spaces were reconfigured to take advantage of the benefits of combining digital content and instructional management software with face-to-face teacher and student collaboration.

In 2012, in recognition of these changes and the growing visibility of blended learning activity, the report's title changed to *Keeping Pace with K–12 Online and Blended Learning*. This was not a change that we took lightly, for several reasons. The evidence showed that online learning, when done well, was transformative because it offered new options to students. Students without access to a wide range of courses in their regular schools could now take the courses online. Students who could not attend a physical school could now enroll in an online school. These online options did not necessarily need to be better or more attractive than their classroom counterparts, because they weren't replacing or competing with existing classroom courses, but instead were course options not available in their schools.

Blended learning's goal differs in that it *does* seek to replace existing classes already offered in the school by improving upon the existing traditional classroom experience. From the outset, research and analysis of blended learning activities was challenging. At a high level, if one defines blended learning as any combination of digital learning and face-to-face instruction, then blended learning implementations have infinite permutations, making it extremely difficult to identify and study these activities in all but a small, dedicated number of newly formed, stand-alone, blended-only schools. Organizations such as the Clayton Christensen Institute have made significant contributions toward creating blended learning definitions and categories of blended models, but while this has been highly useful, there is little consistency among the many interpretations of these definitions by schools for their programs.

To further complicate matters—and create a need to expand the research—the broader digital learning landscape continues to shift in many ways, including the exploding growth of new digital learning technologies and products, the changing and merging ways these resources are used, and shifting levels of usage within the various sectors of the K–12 education industry.

The digital learning landscape

As an initial step in the direction of reporting on broader digital learning activities, the digital learning landscape section in *Keeping Pace 2014* addresses the following:

- Thirty states have fully online schools operating across the entire state, ensuring that students anywhere in the state can attend an online school. In school year (SY) 2013–14, we estimate that over 315,000 students attended these statewide fully online schools, a year over year increase of 6.2%.
- State virtual schools are operating in 26 states, providing supplemental online courses to students across their states. In SY 2013–14 they collectively served just over 740,000 course enrollments, about the same amount as in SY 2012–13.
- Eleven states have course choice policies or programs that are allowing students to choose online courses from one or more providers. These programs are particularly important, as they are the first significant effort to provide students the option to choose from multiple providers at the course level. They are, however, mostly still small and new.
- The most easily identifiable schools that combine online instruction with required attendance at a physical school have been created by individual charter schools, charter management organizations, and pioneering districts.
- Digital learning activity across the private school sector ranges from fully online schools, to supplemental online courses, to new schools that are heavily focused on digital learning, to schools integrating digital content and tools into their existing instructional approaches.

These categories are all important. They are critical to the students who are enrolling in online courses or schools, and they are vital in demonstrating innovative options to educators, students, parents, and policymakers. But the total number of students enrolled in online schools, charter schools, and private schools together accounts for no more than 16% of the total U.S. K–12 student population. Many other forms of digital content, interactive instruction, assessment, and instructional management technologies have been used by tens of millions of students across most K–12 schools for the past four decades or so.

Good data exist on the volume of various products and services being delivered to the K–12 school market, but sufficient and meaningful data on what students are doing and how they are doing it does not yet exist. Therefore, to address this need, *Keeping Pace* is beginning to shift its focus to identify and track student usage across the entirety of K–12 education.

In the past, we identified certain categories of schools and programs and surveyed them for their activity. Now, we will begin to gather and track baseline data at the student level about the use of digital content, tools, devices, and innovative instructional approaches. As we start to develop our high level view into the general landscape of digital learning in the large majority of schools across the country, we are beginning to see how the overall landscape breaks down by age and grade level, which generally looks like the following:

- Most districts, with the exception of some of the smallest ones, are utilizing a variety of digital learning resources—but there can be significant differences in the types and goals of the variety of digital resources used and how they are used. Technology is being used both for the delivery and management of learning, as well as the object of learning as part of efforts to develop 21st century skills and college readiness.
- Digital content and tools vary significantly among high schools, middle schools, and elementary schools:
    - In high schools a variety of digital learning options is common, including the availability of fully online courses, computer labs, learning management platforms, and many forms of digital content. A state virtual school, a private provider, or a central district program often supplies the

online courses. It is typical that digital learning encompasses supplemental activities, assessment, credit recovery, original credit courses, special projects, and more. High schools are more likely than middle or elementary schools to have online courses in which the teacher is online, or the teacher of record is in the same building but does not share a regular class period with students.

  - Digital learning in elementary schools is quite different than digital learning in high schools. In most cases, in the early grades digital learning is made up primarily of self-paced, computer-mediated interactive lessons and exercises on specific topics, like math or English, to provide learning examples and skills practice. Most elementary level content is deliberately designed to exclude online collaboration with other people, such as a teacher, other students, or outside coaches. Students access this type of digital content from a classroom or learning lab, and are supervised by their teacher.
  - Middle schools contain some elements of both elementary schools and high schools, partly because of the transitional ages of their students. Sixth grade students, if they are using digital learning, are most likely to be using interactive skill-based lessons similar in design to elementary level content. Eighth grade students are likely to be using more advanced and varied digital learning content and may even be taking high school courses online.

- Another common setting for extensive use of digital content and tools is alternative education or independent study programs. These are usually at the high school level, but may extend to middle school, and often exist for students who wish to pursue their education in a setting other than the traditional physical school. These programs usually do not follow a regular daily schedule, but may include an on-site component and a digital learning component.
- The most digitally advanced districts have a wide range of digital options in place with powerful infrastructure capabilities to serve most, if not all, students. These districts usually have a range of self-provided and/or externally provided online courses for original credit, and a virtual school for students who wish to take all of their courses online. They offer digital content to students at most grade levels, a way to provide and/or accommodate a range of computer and mobile devices for all students, extensive professional development for teachers, and support mechanisms to assist teachers and instructional leaders with the shift to integrating digital content and tools into their classrooms.

Policy remains critically important to improving and expanding the digital learning landscape

Keeping Pace continues to research and track the important policy issues that help shape the digital learning environment in K–12 education, as policy still drives much of what is happening in individual states in two ways.

First, policy plays a dominant role in how or whether students have access to online schools or online courses. Students in the states with well-supported state virtual schools tend to have good supplemental course access as of SY 2014–15. Students in the states that are implementing course choice may have even better options in the years to come. Students in the states that allow open enrollment in online schools can choose that alternative regardless of whether their district of residence offers online courses. Students in the states that have a number of digitally focused charter schools have new and expanded options, particularly in low-income urban areas.

Second, some digital learning-related policies are creating statewide landscapes of innovation and/or competition that spur activity in districts. For example, districts in Pennsylvania have responded to competition from cyber charter schools by creating their own digital initiatives ranging from online schools,

to online courses, to the increased use of digital content and tools in physical classrooms. Much more digital learning activity exists in Pennsylvania than in neighboring states. States that have well-supported state virtual schools, such as Florida, Idaho, Michigan, and Alabama, have found districts building on the online courses offered by those programs to offer their own innovative options. Online learning graduation requirements have spurred activity in the states that have them, and as more states' requirements come into play we expect to see more impact.

Policy can also slow growth and adoption of digital learning. Twenty states prohibit open enrollment in online schools, and the large majority of states do not allow course choice. In both of these cases, students' course options are limited to those opportunities offered by their district of residence. Seat-time requirements for student funding remain an impediment in many states. Finally, not all policy problems are based on legacy regulations. New laws are being considered in many states—and too often are passing—that have the laudable goal of protecting student privacy, but are written in ways that will slow the spread of data usage in ways that will help schools and students.

2014 has been a relatively quiet year in digital learning policy. Much of the activity has involved tweaking policy to continue in the same direction that the state has taken in previous years, for example creating the implementation policies for course choice programs (e.g., Michigan), or proceeding with implementing charter school regulations or allowing online charter schools to open (e.g., Maine). Unlike in most recent years, relatively few states passed laws that signal a significant change in direction and will have a substantial impact on digital learning. Some of the changes that have the potential for large impacts have not received widespread national attention. Examples of this include North Carolina appointing a "chief academic and digital learning officer" for the state, who is managing a set of initiatives to increase the use of digital content and tools; designated funding from states such as Ohio and California being allocated to digital learning initiatives; and funding changes in Colorado and other states allowing Title I funds to flow to online schools.

Conclusion

At a very high level we believe the following two points, which may appear contradictory at first glance, describe the current state of digital learning in K–12 education:

1. More students have access to more types of digital learning than ever before. Digital learning options are available to many students in a rapidly expanding range of forms, including online courses from multiple sources, dedicated schools built around aggressive digital instruction models, and many digital learning opportunities in traditional school settings.
2. Wide gaps remain in the availability of digital learning. There are still vast differences among schools in the availability of technology, data communications capabilities, and digital content and tools. In addition, limitations placed on schools and students vary by local and state policies, and in decisions made by districts.

Online schools and courses are meeting needs for students in those cases where students do not have access to adequate physical school and course options. However, meaningful information and evidence are lacking for most digital learning activity. Plenty of examples show that digital content and tools can assist in boosting outcomes, but the broad base of digital learning usage and effectiveness is unstudied.

The 11 years of *Keeping Pace* have chronicled the remarkable growth of online learning. But that is only a small part of the full digital learning field, all of which, in many ways, is still in a nascent stage. We are continuing to expand our research and reporting in new and exciting directions, and we are committed to reporting on access, activity, and—to the extent possible—outcomes.

1 DIGITAL LEARNING ACTIVITY

Introduction

The following pages of this section review the digital learning landscape in public schools, schools and programs run by intermediate units, charter schools, private schools, and state virtual schools.

WE OPEN WITH A LOOK AT DIGITAL LEARNING ACTIVITY IN TRADITIONAL PUBLIC SCHOOLS, BECAUSE THE LARGE MAJORITY OF STUDENTS (ABOUT 84%) ATTEND THESE TYPES OF SCHOOLS. Digital learning activity in traditional public schools encompasses a wide range of activities, from fully online schools, to fully online supplemental courses, to the use of digital content and tools that includes both general instructional materials (similar to digital versions of textbooks—although with significantly enhanced capabilities) to adaptive learning software that is used in math, English, and other classes.

The next section considers activity at the level in between individual school districts and state agencies. These may be formal existing organizations such as BOCES, county offices of education, or intermediate school districts, or may be consortium programs being created by districts working together.

A review of digital activity in charter schools follows, dividing into two categories: schools that are fully online, and schools that are using digital content and tools in pioneering ways that change classroom configurations and class schedules.

Private schools, both those that are affiliated with religious or other institutions and those that are independent, are another important segment of U.S. education. We find that although private schools as a whole are behind public schools in terms of digital learning activity, many schools are adding a digital component, and new online schools and programs are being implemented.

The last segment that we review is state virtual schools, which remain an important element of the digital learning landscape in the states in which they are a major provider of online courses.

This section also provides a national online learning snapshot of all 50 states and Washington, DC, focusing on the fully online schools and courses that are available to students statewide. Finally, we delve more deeply into a set of seven public school district snapshots, examining the digital learning activity in each.

Public School Districts

Public school districts have been using a wide variety of digital content and instructional software for many years. Over the years we have seen many examples of innovative and effective use of these tools within core instructional programs from the early grades through high school. In recent years, however, it has been the charter school sector and specialized state virtual schools that have introduced a sea change in digital instruction models that is now finding its way back into the traditional school district environment.

Much of the research emphasis for past *Keeping Pace* reports has been focused on state virtual schools, charter schools, and dedicated digital learning-based schools. But what is occurring within traditional schools and districts?

Background on public school districts and implications for digital learning

Of the 56 million or so K–12 students in the United States, about 47 million (84%) attend non-charter public schools. Of the remainder, 5.3 million students attend private schools (9%), 2.1 million attend charter schools (4%), and 1.8 million are homeschooled (3%).[1] About 14,000 school districts exist across the country, but the distribution of district size is characterized by a long tail of very small districts. The 50% of districts ranging in size between 1,000 and 25,000 students educate 60% of all students. The largest 2% of districts (those that serve more than 25,000 students) educate 35% of all students. Districts of under 1,000 students account for 47% of the total number of districts, but only 5.5% of all students; many of these serve rural communities. Three states are home to 45 of the 100 largest districts: California, Florida, and Texas. These larger districts tend to have larger schools, more Black and Hispanic students, and 56% of their students are eligible for free and reduced-price meals (compared to 45% of all public schools).[2]

The digital landscape in public school districts

Based on observation and consideration of many sources, we believe that most districts, with the exception of some of the smallest ones, are using some form of digital learning, which may range from a fully online school, to supplemental online courses, to skills software used in math, English language arts (ELA), and other classes.

The most common types of digital instruction vary significantly between high schools, middle schools, and elementary schools (see Table 1).

High schools

High schools have the widest and deepest range of digital options, which may include any or all of the following:

- Online courses that include an online teacher are most common at the high school level. These may be focused on one type of student (i.e. advanced courses or credit recovery) or may be wide ranging (i.e. core and elective courses). These are often coordinated at the district level and taken by students from multiple schools. In some cases the district offers enough online courses to provide a student's

[1] National Center for Education Statistics, Enrollment data for SY 2011–12; http://nces.ed.gov/programs/projections/projections2021/tables/table_01.asp, http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2013/2013028/tables/table_07.asp, http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d13/tables/dt13_216.90.asp, and http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d13/tables/dt13_205.10.asp

[2] National Center for Education Statistics (2011). Characteristics of the 100 Largest Public Elementary and Secondary School Districts in the United States; 2008–09. http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2011/2011301.pdf

entire education online for hospitalized, homebound, pregnant, incarcerated, or other students in similar uncommon circumstances.

- Credit recovery courses that may have an online teacher, or may have a site-based facilitator who serves as the teacher of record, are a common starting point for high schools offering online courses. The district may coordinate credit recovery options but have them available at multiple high schools so that students at each school can access the courses.
- An alternative education or independent study program may exist for students who wish to pursue their education in a setting other than a traditional high school. These programs usually do not follow a regular daily schedule, but include an onsite component and an online component.
- Digital content used in classrooms to augment courses that are offered on a traditional daily and semester schedule. Content may be acquired from an outside provider, or developed by teachers for their own courses.

Elementary schools

In elementary schools the use of digital tools and content is usually classroom-based, and typically used in math (mostly) and ELA. Other than in charter schools (which are discussed in the next section), most elementary schools deploy these tools and content within traditional classrooms and daily class schedules. They often seek digital content that is adaptive and can identify students' learning challenges, and report it to the teacher. These schools are finding that in many cases the capabilities of data creation and presentation exceed the ability of teachers—many of whom became teachers in a pre-digital era—to use the data effectively. (Of course one might also say that teachers find that the data are not well presented. In any case, the capabilities of data creation and presentation systems often exceed their usage.)

Middle schools

Middle school digital instruction contains some elements of both elementary schools and high schools, partly because of the transitional ages of their students. Sixth grade students, if they are using digital learning, are most likely to be using skill-based software; 8th grade students may be taking high school courses online in order to advance their learning trajectory, particularly in math.

Table1: Comparison of digital options by grade level in a traditional district

	High school	Elementary school	Middle school
Digital content	Digital content is often used in a wide range of fully online courses, including core, electives, credit recovery, dual enrollment, and advanced courses. In physical classroom-based courses, digital content and software is widely used to augment face-to-face instruction. Depending on the school this may be done at the course, department, school, or district level.	Digital content is most often skill-based, adaptive content in math and ELA, and adoptions are usually at the school or district level. Content is accessed by students during regular class time, under the supervision of the classroom teacher.	Digital learning in middle school includes elements of digital learning in elementary and high schools, with few features that are specific to middle school. The use of digital content and tools in middle schools is a mix of elementary and high school approaches. For example, in middle schools with 6th grade they are likely to use skill-based adaptive content in math and ELA. For 8th grade students, however, they may be taking fully online courses taught by an online teacher, often to take high school-level courses. Districts that have chosen to turn around or completely remake a school with a focus on using digital content and tools are often starting with a middle school.
Digital tools	Often a school-wide or district-wide learning management system and student information system are used as base platforms, although certain content may be accessed within its own technology platform.	Usually a course-specific technology platform is used for each subject area.	
Devices	Devices vary based on the digital options, although across all grade levels content is increasingly being built for mobile devices. Fully online courses usually still require a laptop or desktop computer. Classroom-based digital content is often accessed on a tablet.	Laptop or desktop computers are used less often than tablets, which are often pre-loaded with content that is tablet-specific.	
Teachers	Online courses are taught by teachers from a distance, with little or no face-to-face interaction with students. Classroom-based teachers may use digital content. Alternative education and independent study programs use a combination of online teachers and onsite mentors.	Teachers are almost always classroom-based and use digital content in their existing class.	

District size has considerable implications for digital learning, including the level at which decisions are made.

Small districts

Small districts (up to about 2,500 students) are typically less significant users of digital content and tools than larger districts. The smallest districts are often in remote areas and may have little or no digital learning due to the lack of availability of digital learning delivery capability and/or Internet bandwidth constraints. Small and remote districts that are in states that invested in video conferencing often use it instead of online content. In small districts with good Internet access, online courses are often an important method by which the district augments the small number of courses offered by the district's own schools. Small districts are unlikely to develop their own content or have their own teachers instructing online courses, and therefore tend to use online courses and teaching that is offered by private providers or state virtual schools. These districts are also less prone than larger districts to be using skills software for math and ELA courses in elementary and middle schools. Because the smallest districts have few full-time district level administrators, it is rare for them to have someone who is dedicated to managing digital learning across the district, and the provision of devices and infrastructure (if being done) often falls to someone with less experience and expertise than a person in a similar position in a larger district.

Mid-size districts

Most mid-size districts have a wider variety of digital content and tools available to students, but would still not often have the full range of digital instruction found in larger districts. They may offer one type of digital content to elementary students, and have some online courses available for middle and high school students, particularly for credit recovery. Districts in this category that have multiple middle schools and multiple high schools may be moving low-enrollment courses online because they have enough students in the district, but not enough students in each school, to fill a course. Mid-size and larger districts often have district-level administrators and staff focused on curriculum and instruction, technology, and other areas that pertain to digital instruction. Districts of this size that adopt digital learning as a key strategy are able to dedicate a person—or more—to the effort; this person may coordinate the acquisition of content, devices, professional development, and the other building blocks a digital instruction. These districts would also be more apt to have their own teachers developing digital content and courses, and teaching online courses, although they are almost certainly using some vendor-provided online courses and teaching as well.

Large districts

The great majority of large districts—roughly 25,000 students and higher—are using some digital content and tools. Because districts of this size have multiple schools that tend to have some autonomy in their content and technology selections, district administrators may not readily know the extent of usage of digital content and tools across the entire district. The district may have a coordinated digital learning strategy that includes, for example, a virtual high school and a digitally-focused turnaround middle school, and also have many other digital content providers and devices being used in individual schools with little district-level coordination. In addition, these districts may have an alternative education school or program that is probably using some online courses for students who are not attending a traditional school during the full extent of regular school days and hours. Large districts almost certainly have district-wide instructional and student information platforms, and will have some teachers developing course content within the system.

Although district size is generally predictive of the level of digital learning activity in the district, we find digitally advanced districts of all sizes. These forward-thinking districts have multiple digital options that often include the creation of and/or provision of supplemental online courses for credit recovery and original credit, a virtual school for students who wish to take all of their courses online, digital content for students in classrooms in middle schools and elementary schools, a way to provide devices (tablets or computers) to all students, extensive professional development for teachers, and support mechanisms in place to assist teachers and instructional leaders with the shift to integrating digital content and tools into classrooms.

While many districts have been using digital content and tools for years, most are still in the early stages of creating or rolling out dedicated online programs and inaugurating major changes in their instructional models to incorporate a significant portion of digital learning in their core instructional programs. Also, many districts that have a range of options usually don't have them across all schools.

The digital landscape in non-traditional public school settings

The previous discussion is focused mostly on students who attend traditional public schools. But many districts also operate non-charter, non-traditional digital-based schools and programs. These include in particular the following:

- In a few states (e.g. CO, KS, WA) districts are running online schools that attract students from other districts via open enrollment laws. These online schools operate very much like the online charter schools described in the next section. Indeed, in some cases these schools are managed by the same education management organizations that operate online charter schools.
- In states that allow or incent alternative education or independent study, districts that operate these programs are often using extensive digital tools and content. Alternative education and independent study usually operate free of seat-time requirements, and as such they are able to use online content and perhaps online teaching without worrying about funding implications.
- A growing number of states are creating "innovation zones" or other regulations that allow schools increased flexibility. For example, The Education Achievement Authority (EAA) of Michigan and Matchbook Learning (in partnership with EAA) have been given flexibility by the state to implement new approaches to teaching and learning, along with the charge to turn around the lowest 5% of schools across the state. EAA is a Next Generation Learning Challenges grant recipient and is implementing a mastery-based approach to instruction that relies on digital learning.[3] Similarly, the 2013 Alabama Accountability Act's Innovation Zone / Flexibility Initiative permits applications from schools seeking to waive state rules, enabling formation of assorted nontraditional schools (including virtual ones).[4] Subsequently the Baldwin County Digital Renaissance High School and the Florence City Virtual School opened as pilots in SY 2013–14. The Digital Renaissance High School received permission to operate as a full-time stand-alone high school (renamed Digital Renaissance Virtual School) in SY 2014–15.
- Districts in several states have formed consortia to share in the development, acquisition, and delivery of online courses and other digital content and tools. These are discussed in the Intermediate Districts and Agencies section.

Assessing outcomes in traditional schools

Does digital instruction in public schools improve student outcomes?

Research demonstrates that in some cases the answer is yes, in other cases the answer is no, and in the large majority of cases the answer is either there is no significant difference between digital and non-digital instruction, or sufficient data to answer the question do not exist.

The reasons for the lack of clarity about efficacy of digital instruction are:

- Countless combinations and permutations of digital content, tools, and instruction exist. The studies that examine a small number of digital learning implementations cannot be generalized to other implementations.
- With just a few exceptions, implementations are not across entire schools, and most of the exceptions are newly formed such that outcomes data are not yet available. In most cases, the unit at which states assess public education (the school) is not the unit at which digital learning is implemented.

[3] Educause, Education Achievement Authority: Nolan Elementary-Middle School, November 28, 2012; http://www.educause.edu/library/resources/education-achievement-authority-nolan-elementary-middle-school

[4] Alabama State Department of Education, Approved Innovation / Flexibility Plans; https://www.alsde.edu/Pages/Innovation-ApprovedPlans.aspx

- Most state data systems do not separately track use of digital content or tools. Therefore examination of existing data based on state assessments or other data is rarely possible.
- In the few cases where states are trying to track the use of digital learning at the state level—for example in Michigan—to this point, according to most researchers, the data are of poor quality.

Research does exist for a variety of specific digital content and tools. These studies demonstrate that digital learning can improve outcomes in the cases in which they have been studied. However, because implementations vary so much, they are not predictive of outcomes in future implementations.

Intermediate Districts and Agencies

Thirty-three states have a level of educational agency that is in between the district level and the state level. These are collectively called "intermediate" or "regional" education agencies, and across all states almost 1,300 of these agencies exist.[5] In specific states they may be called regional service agencies, intermediate districts, boards of cooperative educational services (BOCES), county offices, or by other names. They vary in numerous ways, including whether most of their budget is derived from a formula that automatically provides funding based on the number of students in the region, or whether they are offering services which districts in the region may choose to buy. Regardless of these differences, in some states these organizations are important providers of online schools and courses, and digital content and tools.

In addition to the programs run by intermediate units, in some cases districts have come together to create a consortium that is a new organization to offer online courses. These organizations may be incorporated as formal non-governmental organizations, or they may operate under inter-district agreements with one district serving as the fiscal agent.

Although existing intermediate units and consortia have different starting points, they have in common that they operate at a level between individual districts and states, and offer digital content, tools, and/or fully online courses to member schools and/or students.

Examples include the following:

- In California, county offices of education operate independent study programs that are often heavily based on online courses or other digital content and tools. Independent study programs are not tied to seat-time restrictions in California, so they usually require limited attendance at a physical school. About 330,000 students are in independent study programs across the state. No data exist about the extent of the use of digital tools and content within these programs, but most such programs are using at least some digital instruction. In some cases independent study programs are mostly online. These alternative education programs are recognized by the state as schools (i.e. they have a school code and receive an Academic Performance Index score.)
- The Wisconsin eSchool Network (WEN) is one of the oldest and largest consortium programs. WEN is a consortium of 19 partnering school districts, eight of which are among the 11 largest districts in the state. WEN served 14,644 course enrollments in SY 2013–14, a 43% increase over the previous year. WEN was formally established as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization in 2012. WEN partnered with the Wisconsin Virtual School to sign a memorandum of understanding with the department of public instruction (DPI) in 2012 to operate as the Wisconsin Digital Learning Collaborative, meeting a statutory requirement for the Wisconsin Web Academy. The collaboration allows the DPI to expand the offerings of the Web Academy and provide a single point of access to online courses, digital learning solutions, and resources for students statewide.
- Just south of Wisconsin, Expanding Learning Opportunities (eLo) is an online consortium collaboratively formed by Community Unit 200 (Wheaton-Warren), Naperville Community Unit School District 203, and Indian Prairie School District 204 in suburban Chicago, Illinois. The consortium is sharing online course content, teachers, and a learning management system. In SY 2014–15 the consortium is offering its first 20 online semester courses for high school students. Courses will be taught by teachers from all three districts, using purchased content that has been customized to meet consortium standards. The consortium expects to grow by 50% a year until a full K–12 set of courses is available to district students.

[5] National Center for Education Statistics (2010). Documentation to the NCES Common Core of Data Local Education Agency Universe Survey: School Year 2008–09; http://nces.ed.gov/ccd/pdf/pau081agen.pdf

- In Florida, two regional consortia (the Panhandle Area Educational Consortium and the North East Florida Regional Consortium) representing 27 districts (of 67 statewide) operated franchises of FLVS in 2013–14. District franchises allow districts to use FLVS courses with their own teachers. The franchises may serve home education, private school, and public school students in their regions.
- GenNET Online Learning, a consortium operated by the Genesee Intermediate School District in Michigan, offers districts access to online courses through its Online Learning Portal. It processed more than 18,000 course enrollments in SY 2013–14, a decrease of 21% from the previous year. GenNET provides schools with access to over 1,200 online courses from a list of providers that have been vetted to ensure quality and rigor of content. GenNET is authorized by the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) to extend its seat-time waiver (which allows the district to have the state's pupil accounting rules waived to allow eligible students to take coursework online) to partner districts across Michigan. Any school can enroll students in up to two courses via GenNET without a seat-time waiver.
- The Southwest Colorado eSchool was launched by the San Juan BOCES in SY 2012–13. It served 48 students in grades 7–12 in nine very rural districts in SY 2013–14, offering a fully online option that can be supplemented with in-person support services at one of two learning centers. In addition, the learning centers have a large-screen conferencing center where teachers can offer synchronous support to students in a high-tech environment. Teachers are hired locally, and courses are primarily sourced from a large district program in the state, JeffCo's 21st Century Virtual Academy, as well as the state virtual school, Colorado Online Learning.

Charter Schools

Charter school laws exist to create a type of school that has some freedom from regulations that allows the schools to be more innovative than traditional schools. As such, it is not surprising that as a whole, charter schools in recent years have been a visible leader in widespread implementation of virtual schools and revolutionary changes in bricks-and-mortar school instructional models. Charter schools are serving a higher percentage of students with a fully online education (where students receive all of their courses online and not in a physical school), and have a higher percentage of schools that use digital tools and content in ways that substantially change the instructional approach, than either traditional public schools or private schools.

Background on charter schools and implications for digital learning in charter schools

Forty-two states and Washington, DC allow public charter schools, and as of SY 2014–15 all of these states have active charter schools serving students (Washington state and Maine opened their first charter schools in fall 2014). A total of 2.1 million students (3.7% of all public school students) attend charter schools. There are slightly more elementary students in charter schools than high school students.

The 42 state charter school laws vary widely in how many charter schools they allow, who authorizes charter schools, and the authorizing process. The result is that the number of charter schools and the percentage of students they serve vary widely among the 42 states. For example, California has 985 charter schools serving 413,124 students (6.7% of California students), while Virginia has just four charter schools serving only 393 students (a negligible percentage of the state's student population).

Another major difference in charter school laws is the level of funding that they provide to charter schools, including both base (or foundation) funding, and whether charter schools are able to receive additional funding based on categories or weighting of students (e.g. for at-risk students).

In states that allow online charter schools, an additional key difference in state laws is whether students are able to choose a school that is chartered by an entity other than the student's district of enrollment. This issue is discussed in the policy section.

Digital learning in charter schools

Most digital learning in charter schools falls into two main categories: schools that are fully online, and schools that are using digital content and tools extensively to change their instructional approaches.

The first category of schools, the fully online charter schools, operate in 26 states as of SY 2014–15, and served about 200,000 students in SY 2013–14.[6] These schools generally share the following characteristics:

- They provide students' entire course load through online courses, and do not have a physical building that students attend regularly.
- They are responsible for students' state assessments, and are graded, as all charter schools are, based on the state's performance framework.
- Teachers and students communicate from a distance, using online communication tools (both synchronous and asynchronous) and telephones.
- They often provide extensive professional development for teachers, because they are not able to hire enough teachers with sufficient previous experience teaching online.

[6] These numbers are from a report unpublished as of August 2014 written by the Evergreen Education Group for the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools.

- Collectively they serve all grade levels. Methods of instruction vary between grade levels. Younger students spend less time online and use more print materials, and use a parent or other learning coach for help. Older students spend more time online, use fewer print materials, and communicate mostly with their teacher online.
- Most are operated by private education management organizations (EMOs), the largest of which are K12 Inc. and Connections Academy.
- They serve students with much higher rates of mobility than the student population as a whole. In the case of elementary and middle school students, many attend an online school due to temporary reasons (illness, injury, behavioral issues, allergies). In high schools, many students move to an online school because they are behind and at risk of dropping out of school altogether.
- They enroll students from across entire states, in order to reach a critical mass.
- Although many schools serve between 500 and 1,500 students, some are very large, such as Pennsylvania Cyber Charter School (10,389 students), Ohio Virtual Academy (13,147 students), and the Electronic High School of Tomorrow (also in Ohio, with 13,537 students).

The second category includes charter schools that are using digital content and tools extensively to change their instructional approaches. This category, however, is not as clearly defined as the fully online charter schools, and descriptions of example schools and networks are more illustrative than common characteristics of all (because there are very few common characteristics). Some of the examples below were started as schools that use extensive digital content and instruction, including online teaching and relatively little instruction that is based on a teacher and a student in a physical classroom together. Others started as physical schools with little or no digital learning.

Nexus Academy

Nexus Academy is a network of small (no more than 300 students) college prep charter high schools operated by Connections Education, which is the partner for Connections Academy online schools. The first five Nexus Academy schools opened in fall 2012 in Ohio and Michigan; the network added two schools in fall 2013 in Indiana and Michigan. Nexus Academy students report to campus four hours per day, four days per week, and work away from campus for about 14 hours per week. While on campus, students spend part of their time in college commons-like team zones supervised by specially trained para-educators who help them stay on track and connect with their online teachers. English and math instruction is provided by face-to-face teachers working with students in small groups based on their learning needs. Most of the Nexus Academy campuses also have fitness centers staffed by personal trainers who develop individualized fitness plans for every student. Both online and on-site teachers use student performance data to schedule students for real-time direct instruction, intervention, and group / project-based learning. In SY 2012–13 (the most recent year for which complete data are available), 92% of Nexus Academy seniors graduated, and 95% of graduates were accepted into higher education.

K12 Inc.

K12 Inc. broadened its focus to included fully blended charter schools with the opening of the San Francisco Flex Academy in 2010, which serves about 100 students in grades 9–12. The Silicon Flex Academy followed in 2011, serving about 350 students, and the Newark Prep Charter Academy in 2012, which served about 300 students in SY 2013–14. Students attend the schools full-time, but are given flexibility in how they meet their academic goals. Curriculum is available online, and support is available from teachers who work with students independently and in small groups, as well as from academic coaches, who closely monitor each student's academic progress while they work independently in the Flex Center. San Francisco Flex achieved an academic performance index (API) score of 734 and Silicon Flex achieved a score of 789 in SY 2012–13. K12 Inc. also operates the Youth Connections Charter School's Chicago Passport program (2009), and the Hill House Passport Academy in Pittsburgh (fall 2014), both of which are blended programs that target students who have dropped out of high school, offering a flexible path to high school graduation.

Summit Public Schools

Summit Public Schools operates seven charter high schools serving approximately 2,000 students in the San Francisco Bay Area, and it has been approved to open two schools in Washington State in fall 2015. A SY 2011–12 pilot in math classrooms in two schools using Khan Academy laid the foundation for the first two fully blended schools that opened in SY 2013–14, and for the approach being used by all seven Summit schools as of SY 2014–15. The schools use a combination of self-directed online learning, small group work, project-based learning, and individualized attention from teachers and support staff in a very different type of academic space that allows for students to work independently on computers, with small groups, or with larger groups in a classroom. Summit has monitored its blended learning implementation carefully, using data from student surveys, student focus groups, and student performance to drive improvement.[7] Its blended schools found positive results compared to the Summit schools that had not yet implemented blended learning.[8] To date, 96% of Summit students have been accepted to at least one four-year college, and Summit graduates are completing college within six years at double the national average.[9]

Aspire Public Schools

Aspire Public Schools was founded in 1998 in Silicon Valley. It now operates 34 schools in California and three schools in Tennessee, altogether serving over 37,000 students. For the past four years, 100% of Aspire's graduates have been accepted for admission to a four-year college or university. Every year, Aspire creates a report about each school that includes standardized test results, parent involvement opportunities, the school's API score (in California), and enrollment data. Its Tennessee schools won a Next Generation Learning Challenges grant, and plan to expand to open 10 schools in Tennessee in the next few years. Aspire introduced blended learning in two of its schools in 2011, incorporated it into five schools by SY 2013–14, and is planning to use blended learning in 14 schools across the country by SY 2015–16, including all of its Los Angeles schools with support from the Eli and Edythe Broad Foundation.[10]

KIPP

The KIPP (Knowledge is Power Program) launched in 1994, and is one of the largest charter management organizations in the country with 162 charter schools in 20 states and Washington, DC serving 58,000 students as of SY 2014–15.[11] As KIPP's origins predate online and blended learning, there are varied implementations around the country; however, many KIPP schools including five in Los Angeles (three elementary and two middle schools serving 1,650 students) utilize blended learning.[12] Each spring the KIPP Foundation releases a report card that contains school information, school demographics, and test score data for all KIPP schools.[13] All KIPP schools administer state accountability tests and nationally norm-referenced exams in grades 2–8. KIPP is focused on opening new schools within existing KIPP regions, but it does not plan to expand to new cities in the near future.

FirstLine Schools

FirstLine Schools was founded in 1998 under the name Middle School Advocates, changing its name to FirstLine in 2008. It served about 2,400 students in four elementary schools and one high school in

[7] Wilka, M. and Cohen, J. (2013) It's Not Just About the Model: Blended Learning, Innovation, and Year 2 at Summit Public Schools. FSG and Summit Public Schools; http://www.fsg.org/tabid/191/ArticleId/993/Default.aspx?srpush=true

[8] Murphy, R., Snow, E., Mislevy, J., Gallagher, L., Krumm, A., and Wei, X. Blended Learning Report (May 2014) Michael and Susan Dell Foundation and SRI International; http://5a03f68e230384a218e0-938ec019df699e606c950a5614b999bd.r33.cf2.rackcdn.com/MSDF-Blended-Learning-Report-May-2014.pdf

[9] Summit Public Schools results; http://www.summitps.org/results

[10] Aspire Public Schools Organizational Update and Quarterly Financial Report for the Period Ending December 31, 2013; http://aspirepublicschools.org/media/filer_public/2014/02/18/aspire_public_schools_investor_report_21514_1.pdf

[11] About KIPP; http://www.kipp.org/about-kipp

[12] Bernatek, B., Cohen, J., Hanlon, J., and Wilka, M. *Blended Learning in Practice: Case Studies from Leading Schools. Featuring: KIPP Empower Academy.* (2012); http://5a03f68e230384a218e0-938ec019df699e606c950a5614b999bd.r33.cf2.rackcdn.com/Blended_Learning_Kipp_083012.pdf

[13] KIPP Report Card; http://www.kipp.org/reportcard

New Orleans in SY 2013–14. Its schools serve an average of a 97% free and reduced-price meal population, and historically, its students performed very poorly on state assessments. Arthur Ashe Elementary School and Joseph S. Clark Preparatory High School began using a rotation model of blended instruction in SY 2011–12 in math and English language arts; all five schools are incorporating blended models as of SY 2014–15. FirstLine does not anticipate adding more schools in the near future. In eight years of operation, each school has shown positive growth results, and all schools are near or above state averages for achievement.[14]

Alliance College-Ready Public Schools

Alliance College-Ready Public Schools is a charter school network of 26 middle and high schools serving more than 10,000 students in the greater Los Angeles area, most of whom are low-income. Alliance creates a personalized learning plan for each student, and 10 of its schools use a digital learning approach the network calls "Blended Learning for Alliance School Transformation."[15]

Rocketship Education

Rocketship Education operates nine schools in the San Jose area of California, one school in Nashville, and one school in Milwaukee as of SY 2014–15. It anticipates opening at least one school in Washington, DC in 2015, and possibly more schools in its existing cities. It had originally planned to expand to additional cities rather quickly, but scaled back its plans after initially high academic results dropped in SY 2013–14. The blended learning aspect of Rocketship (which it calls the Learning Lab) is just one of three key components of its instructional model.[16] 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 generally[17] and in terms of the Learning Lab.[18] However, test scores have dropped as the network of schools has grown, prompting the organization to modify its teaching model and reconsider rapid expansion plans.[19]

Carpe Diem

Carpe Diem launched its first blended school in Yuma, Arizona, an online school with four support centers in the Phoenix metropolitan area. It has since expanded and now operates schools in Indianapolis, Cincinnati, and San Antonio. Students attend a brick-and-mortar campus four days each week. Students have control over the pace of their learning, mastering material before they move on to the next topic. Carpe Diem –Yuma has been the state leader in student growth for two years, outperformed all other county schools the last four years on the Arizona Instrument for Measuring Standards (AIMS) test, and has achieved an average of 92% proficiency on the state's math and reading assessments.[20]

The above examples are not an exhaustive list. Additional charter schools and networks that are taking innovative approaches to the use of digital learning include USC Hybrid High School in Los Angeles,[21] Intrinsic Schools in Chicago, and Matchbook Learning, with schools in Detroit and Newark.[22]

[14] FirstLine Schools Results info; http://www.firstlineschools.org/our-results.html
[15] Alliance College-Ready Public Schools; http://www.laalliance.org/apps/pages/index.jsp?uREC_ID=191024&type=d&pREC_ID=395157
[16] Rocketship Education, The Model; http://www.rsed.org/our-model.cfm
[17] See, for example, reports from the California Department of Education that look at Rocketship school Academic Performance Index (API) scores; http://api.cde.ca.gov/reports/API/APISearchName.asp?TheYear=&cTopic=API&cLevel=School&cName=rocketship&cCounty=&cTimeFrame=S
[18] Wang, H., and Woodworth, K., *Evaluation of Rocketship Education's Use of DreamBox Learning's Online Mathematics Program.* (2011) SRI International; http://www.dreambox.com/wp-content/uploads/downloads/pdf/DreamBox_Results_from_SRI_Rocketship_Evaluation.pdf
[19] Education Week, *Growing Pains for Rocketship's Blended-Learning Juggernaut*, January 21, 2014; http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2014/01/21/19el-rotation.h33.html
[20] Carpe Diem-Yuma Results; http://www.carpediemschools.com/results/
[21] *Profile of USC Hybrid High*, a Next Gen Learning Challenges grantee, from Educause; http://www.educause.edu/library/resources/usc-hybrid-high-school
[22] The Newark School, Merit Prep, was run by Touchstone Education, which merged with Matchbook.

These charter schools, and others that are using digital instruction, share some characteristics with fully online charter schools, but in many ways they are fundamentally different. For example:

- Their level of digital instruction varies. They may use digital content and tools across most subject areas, or in just one or more core areas.
- The proportion of instruction that takes place online varies between subjects, grade levels, and schools. No single approach exists.
- Because they require students to attend the physical school on most days, they are geographically limited. Student mobility in these schools is not as high as mobility in online schools.
- Compared to public school districts, they are more likely to be using pioneering approaches to classroom and school configurations, instructional models, and bell schedules.
- They often provide extensive professional development for teachers, because they are not able to hire enough teachers with sufficient experience using digital content and tools.

Assessing outcomes in charter schools

More information about student outcomes is available from the charter schools than about any of the other segments of digital learning discussed in *Keeping Pace*. This is because in most cases charter schools are separate schools, which is the unit at which public education is primarily assessed. Charter school students take state assessments and the schools are graded by the state in the way that all charter schools or public schools in the state are graded.[23]

Many school administrators believe that state assessment systems and performance frameworks do not paint an accurate picture of school performance, for a variety of reasons but especially because the socio-economic status of a school's students is generally the most accurate predictor of school performance. Online school administrators argue that state performance frameworks are particularly poor at assessing online school performance for several reasons. Most states' performance systems weigh proficiency heavily, and many students in online schools enter the school behind in grade level, or otherwise exhibiting one or more characteristics of at-risk students. Student growth is often based on student cohorts and other factors other than individual students' learning trajectories. In addition, online schools have high rates of student mobility, which are not well accounted for in state performance frameworks and especially in graduation rates.

Many states recognize the shortcomings of their performance frameworks and are adding additional measures including improved growth measures and college readiness, but most states still weight proficiency heavily. Within the frameworks that online school administrators argue are poor—and many observers agree—online schools as a group tend to score below state averages. Some individual online charter schools score at or above average, demonstrating that online schools can be successful.

Performance of the site-based charter schools that are listed in the previous section, by contrast, tend to be better than state averages. Rocketship, KIPP, and Alliance schools are among those that have demonstrated performance that surpasses state averages in terms of state assessments, graduation rates, and college matriculation. In these and other cases, the portion of instruction that is digital varies, and therefore the extent to which positive results can be attributed to digital learning is unclear. Most of these schools are using innovative approaches to instruction (such as mastery-based learning and personalized learning plans) that may rely on digital tools, but go beyond digital learning.

[23] An exception is that in a few cases an online school is linked to a physical school for state reporting purposes. If a school has an online component and a non-online component student performance in each part of the school may not be disaggregated.

Private Schools

In the United States about 30,000[24] private schools enroll just over 5 million K–12 students,[25] which is roughly 9% of all students attending school. All grade levels from 1–12 are about equally represented, but kindergarten has about 100,000 more students than any other grade. Most private schools are small, with an average size of 146 students. The average student-to-teacher ratio is about 11:1, which is lower than the average in public schools (about 16:1).[26] Most of these schools (68% of schools enrolling 80% of private school students) have a religious affiliation. Catholic schools alone account for 22% of private schools enrolling 43% of students. Catholic schools also have lower average annual tuition ($4,570) than the average across all private schools ($6,820). Nonsectarian schools are smaller in number and have a much higher average tuition of $15,200.[27]

Private schools are regulated by the states in which they operate. State regulations vary but all states have far fewer regulations for private schools than for public schools. Regulations mostly involve health and safety (e.g. related to building codes), and also aim to ensure that private schools are providing an education that fits the requirements of compulsory education laws. Some states also have requirements involving teacher certification or curriculum.[28]

Although little formal and systematic reporting exists about the use of digital learning in private schools, key characteristics of digital learning in private schools include the following:

- Although the first online K–12 school in the United States was a private school (Laurel Springs), private schools generally lag behind public schools in their use of digital learning.
- Online private schools, and providers of online courses to private school students, are generally smaller and newer than their public school counterparts. Examples include the Global Online Academy and the Online School for Girls (more details on these are given below). For providers of digital content, tools, and devices who work with both public and private schools and students, the public sector is generally a far larger segment—in fact disproportionately larger—for them than the private sector.
- The adoption of devices (tablets and laptops) for students is more common than school-wide adoption of digital content or education-specific technology platforms such as learning management systems.

Examples of digital learning from across the private school sector suggest that digital learning varies in important ways that are shaped by elements of the sector. For example:

- Catholic schools and Jewish schools are using digital learning primarily in an attempt to lower costs. Many of these small schools, with low student/teacher ratios, have high unsustainable costs. Their entry into the use of digital learning is often facilitated by private donors, foundations, and associated non-profit organizations.
- Independent schools often invest in technology, whether it is digital content, digital devices, or maker's studios. But these schools already have small class sizes in most cases, and parents are expecting students to experience personalized learning and high levels of attention from teachers. They can't easily move to digital tools and content to personalize learning because they are expected to already

[24] Unless otherwise noted, general private school data are from Broughman, S.P., and Swaim, N.L. (2013). Characteristics of Private Schools in the United States: Results From the 2011–12 Private School Universe Survey (NCES 2013-316). U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics; http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch

[25] Hussar, W.J., and Bailey, T.M. (2011). Projections of Education Statistics to 2020 (NCES 2011-026). U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. Washington, DC; http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2011/2011026.pdf

[26] The public school student: teacher ratio is from NCES Fast Facts; http://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=28

[27] National Center for Education Statistics, Table 205.50. Private elementary and secondary enrollment, number of schools, and average tuition, by school level, orientation, and tuition: Selected years, 1999–2000 through 2011–12; http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d13/tables/dt13_205.50.asp

[28] http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oii/nonpublic/regulation-map.html

be personalizing learning, and also because of the perception that students should be spending time primarily with the teacher, not very much with a computer.

- Because private schools tend to be small, they usually have more limited course catalog offerings than larger schools, and thus are considering online courses primarily to increase course options for students. This concern has driven the creation of several online and/or blended consortia from groups of private schools.
- Online school and course offerings exist for the private school sector that are similar to those in the public sector, and sometimes are run by the same organizations as the public options—although as noted above the organizations that are specific to private schools are mostly smaller and newer than their public school counterparts. For example, Connections Education and K12 Inc., outsource operators of online charter schools, each are also managers of one or more online private schools as well. The Virtual High School consortium works primarily with public schools, but has private school members as well. The Global Online Academy, Online School for Girls, Virtual Independent School Network (VISnet), and Hybrid Learning Consortium are all examples of private school consortia that are similar to public-school counterparts.

Notable schools and other efforts

Notable schools, consortia, and other initiatives within the private school sector include the following:

The Online School for Girls

The Online School for Girls (OSG) is a consortium of 83 schools, including a dozen schools that were founding members. In SY 2013–14, OSG offered seven summer courses and 20 school-year courses; all courses were developed by OSG. It provided 872 semester enrollments to 420 unique students, 90% of whom live in the U.S., with an annual growth rate of 41%. OSG also provides extensive professional development, and had 589 enrollments in professional development programs in SY 2013–14. Both student courses and professional development courses are not limited to member schools; about 5% of student enrollments and 50% of professional development enrollments come from outside of the consortium. OSG is piloting the Online School for Boys during SY 2014–15.

The Global Online Academy

The Global Online Academy is a consortium that offers online courses to 53 member schools representing 24 states, and nine international schools. It was started in 2011. In SY 2013–14 the consortium had about 500 course enrollments, a number that is expected to more than double in SY 2014–15. About 80% of course enrollments are from U.S. schools. Teachers who are employed by consortium schools developed its 32 online courses.

Connections Education, The Virtual High School, and K12 Inc.

Three providers of online public schools and courses (Connections Education, The Virtual High School, and K12 Inc.) offer courses or schools to private school students. Virtual High School offers supplemental online courses. Connections Education and K12 Inc. operate private online schools that serve both supplemental online courses and full course loads to private school students, and are able to grant diplomas.

Bay Area BlendEd Consortium

The Bay Area BlendEd Consortium is a group of five independent schools in the San Francisco Bay Area working collaboratively to offer 10 blended classes available in fall 2014. Developed by teachers from each school, the courses are designed to combine online instruction with several face-to-face meetings

throughout a semester. The initial Consortium courses are electives that tap into the unique learning resources available in the Bay Area.[29]

Oaks Christian Online School

Oaks Christian Online School (OCO) provided online courses to about 600 part-time students and 100 full-time students in SY 2013–14, and is growing at about 35% annually. About 15% of all students live outside of the U.S. OCO develops about 80% of its courses and uses an outside provider for the others, but uses its own teachers for all courses. OCO partners with the Oaks Christian School, although each school issues separate diplomas. Students often take online classes while attending the physical school, or sometimes take a full load of online courses while away from the physical campus for a semester. The physical school uses the same learning management system and some of the same course content as the online school.

Foundations and nonprofit organizations

Foundations and nonprofit organizations are playing an important role in funding and/or helping private schools adopt digital learning. BOLD Day Schools, which is funding five Jewish Day Schools in a shift to blended learning, is a cooperative project of the Affordable Jewish Education Project, The AVI CHAI Foundation, and the Kohelet Foundation.[30] AVI CHAI is also supporting a handful of new schools that are being created based on a blended learning instructional model,[31] and working with existing schools to adopt digital content and tools in the DigitalJLearning Network.[32] Catholic education has a similar effort. The Phaedrus Initiative of Seton Education Partners is working with several schools, including Mission Dolores Academy in San Francisco and St. Therese Academy in Seattle, to reduce costs while improving student outcomes by increasing personalization using digital learning.[33]

Table 2 provides a snapshot of these and other schools.

Policy

Policy related to digital learning in private schools falls into three general areas: the extent to which private school students can access publicly funded online courses; regulations affecting private schools that may limit their ability to offer online courses, and the extent to which private schools can receive public funding in digital learning technology.

Keeping Pace 2013[34] reported on the issue of whether private school students are eligible to take any publicly funded online courses, and little has changed in the past year. Almost all students can take online courses by becoming either part-time or full-time public school students,[35] but the mechanisms by which states allow access to publicly funded courses or schools for private school students vary. In many states with state virtual schools, for example, a student can enroll as a part-time student in a school district and take a state virtual school course. In most states, however, the student would then be considered a public school student, and would be included in state reporting, making it difficult to quantify the number of private or homeschooled students taking publicly funded courses. Further, some public programs provide online courses to students who are primarily non-public school students, but the courses are available only if parents pay for them. These become, effectively, private-pay options for non-public school students. Some states, however, make supplemental online courses available to private school students without considering

[29] BlendEd Consortium; http://www.blendedconsortium.org/
[30] BOLD Day Schools; http://www.bolddayschools.org/
[31] The AVI CHAI Foundation; http://avichai.org/program-listings/incubating-new-schools-with-a-blended-learning-model/
[32] DigitalJLearning; http://www.digitaljlearning.org/
[33] Phaedrus Initiative; http://www.setonpartners.org/phaedrus-initiative-a2985
[34] See pages 32-33 of *Keeping Pace 2013*
[35] In the past some states had imposed a "prior public" requirement on students entering online schools, mandating that students entering online schools had been in the public school system previously, but most states that had this requirement have done away with it.

them to be part-time public school students. Utah, Idaho, Florida, and Texas are in this category. In a related situation, in Milwaukee the Jewish Hillel High School has its students enroll in an online school, eAchieve Academy, for their general studies courses.[36]

In most cases state policies regulating private schools do not limit their ability to offer digital instruction or online courses. In a few instances, state mechanisms for approving private schools do not allow for fully online private schools. For example, according to a Nevada regulation, a "child who is exempt from compulsory attendance and is enrolled in a private school … is not eligible to enroll in or otherwise attend a program of distance education…."[37] A staff person at the state education agency acknowledges that the law is outdated, particularly given that Nevada allows public school students to take online courses and attend online schools.[38]

Some states have funding policies that support private schools, and in some cases these are related to digital learning. For example, in Ohio, blended K–12 educational content (as well as tools for professional development) may be purchased through ilearnOhio under the Ohio eTextbook Pilot program. Three million dollars in grant funding is available in both FY 2014 and FY 2015 to support purchases by Ohio public school districts and certain private schools.

Table 2: Notable school operators and consortia in digital learning

Program name	Description
Laurel Springs	The oldest online school in the United States. It started in 1991 and developed its online curriculum in 1994. It serves students in grades K–12.
Stanford University Online High School	Offers a full-time online school and supplemental online courses for gifted students in grades 7–12. Started in 2006 and is situated at Stanford University.
Oaks Christian Online School	Provided online courses to about 600 part-time students and 100 full-time students in SY 2013–14, and is growing at about 35% annually. About 15% of all students live outside of the U.S.
BlendEd Consortium	Group of five independent schools in the San Francisco Bay Area working collaboratively to offer 10 blended classes beginning in fall 2014.
Mission Dolores Academy	Independent, K–8 Catholic school that uses extensive digital learning to differentiate instruction in small groups across all grade levels.
Online School for Girls	Consortium of 83 schools. In SY 2013–14, OSG offered 7 summer courses and 20 school year courses. It provided 872 semester enrollments to 420 unique students.
Global Online Academy	Consortium that began in 2011 and offers online courses to 53 member schools representing 24 states, and nine international schools. In SY 2013–14 the consortium served about 500 course enrollments,
VISNet	Consortium of about 60 independent schools, primarily in the southeastern U.S. In SY 2013–14 it served about 900 course enrollments. Member schools also use online content for onsite courses.
Hybrid Learning Consortium	Collective of independent schools offering about 35 online courses for high school students. Founded and directed by The Barstow School.
Connections Education	Has about 1,000 students in its private school, International Connections Academy. About 60% are full-time and 40% part-time.
K12 Inc.	The largest operator of online public schools in the U.S. has three private schools that enroll students full-time and also offer individual online courses: The Keystone School, George Washington University Online High School, and K^{12} International Academy. These schools served a mix of 5,686 full-time and part-time students, totaling 22,595 semester course enrollments.
Eight Schools Association Online Initiative	Consortium of boarding schools (Andover, Choate, Deerfield, Exeter, Hotchkiss, Lawrenceville, Northfield Mount Hermon, and St. Paul's) working together to provide supplemental online core and elective courses. The consortium launched first two online courses in summer 2014, and three more in fall 2014.

[36] Hillel High School; http://www.hillelhigh.com/templates/articlecco_cdo/aid/2239256/jewish/eAchieve-General-Studies-Curriculum.htm
[37] Nevada Revised Statutes 388.850, Eligibility for enrollment; http://www.leg.state.nv.us/NRS/NRS-388.html#NRS388Sec850
[38] Personal communication with the Nevada Department of Education, July 15, 2014

State Virtual Schools

State virtual schools remain an important part of the online learning landscape, although their total enrollments did not grow over the past year for the first time since *Keeping Pace* began tracking them in 2003. State virtual schools served 741,516 supplemental online course enrollments in 26 states in SY 2013–14. Florida Virtual School (FLVS) is by far the biggest state virtual school and accounts for 50% of all course enrollments in state virtual schools nationally, but its course enrollments dropped 8.1% to 377,508 in SY 2013–14. The reduction in FLVS enrollments accounts for the drop in national numbers overall. Excluding FLVS, total enrollments in all other state virtual schools increased by 9.7% in SY 2013–14.

Keeping Pace defines state virtual schools as programs 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 students or their districts to help cover costs.

As we have noted for the last two years, state virtual schools, for the most part, continue to diverge into two different groups: those that are large and growing, and those that are small and either shrinking or, at best, maintaining their enrollment numbers. The state virtual schools in Georgia, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Virginia, and West Virginia all saw double-digit growth each of the last two years. In Colorado, Iowa, Hawaii, Mississippi, and Utah state virtual school enrollments have dropped in each of the last two years, and these all have small enrollment totals. The largest of these was Utah which served 4,741 course enrollments, while Colorado is the smallest established state virtual school in the country, serving 914 enrollments in SY 2013–14 (the only program that is smaller is Alaska's Learning Network, which served 608 course enrollments in SY 2013–14 and only opened in SY 2012–13).

State virtual schools that grew substantially include the following (also see Table 3 for more examples):

- North Carolina Virtual Public School (NCVPS) served 104,799 course enrollments in SY 2013–14, an annual increase of 11%, making it the second largest state virtual school in the country. Legislation and state board policy[39] prohibit any state-funded entity from offering statewide "e-learning opportunities" without the approval of NCVPS, whether it is programmatic or at the course level, although schools may offer activity just to their students that is not subject to NCVPS review.
- Georgia Virtual School (GAVS) is one of the larger state virtual schools, and served 33,041 course enrollments in SY 2013–14, a 28% increase over the previous year. This increase appears at least in part to be due to a bill passed in 2012, SB289,[40] which stated that all students in grades 9–12 may enroll in online courses in GAVS without approval of the student's home district, "regardless of whether the school in which the student is enrolled offers the same course." It also eliminated a limit of one GAVS course per semester per student. In addition, all districts must provide written information on both part- and full-time online learning options to parents of all students in grades 3–12.
- In SY 2014–15 Virtual Arkansas is completing a transition into the role of primary coordinator of digital learning services, replacing first Arkansas Virtual High School in 2012, and then the former Arkansas Distance Learning Consortium (ARDL) in 2013. In SY 2013–14 Virtual Arkansas served 3,734 online supplemental courses to students in 149 schools, an 87% enrollment increase.[41] Arkansas school districts pay a $2,500 annual membership fee to schedule courses with state-approved, state-funded providers, as well as a fee of $25 per student enrollment.

[39] North Carolina SB897 (2009); http://www.ncleg.net/Sessions/2009/Bills/Senate/PDF/S897v8.pdf and State Board Policy GCS M-001. Section 10; http://sbepolicy.dpi.state.nc.us/policies/GCS-M-001.asp?pri=01&cat=M&pol=001&acr=GCS

[40] Georgia SB289 (2012); http://www.legis.ga.gov/legislation/en-US/display/20112012/SB/289

[41] Personal communication with Virtual Arkansas, July 20, 2014

Table 3: State virtual schools that have shown net enrollment growth in the last two years

State	Course enrollments SY 2013–14	Annual change SY 2011–12 to SY 2012–13	Annual change SY 2012–13 to SY 2013–14
Alaska	608	-	+82%
Arkansas	3,734	-33%	+87%
Florida	377,508	+35%	-8%
Georgia	33,041	+24%	+28%
New Hampshire	22,731	+13%	+29%
North Carolina	104,799	-3%	+11%
North Dakota	6,100	+7%	+91%
South Carolina	24,491	+6%	+46%
Virginia	19,433	+102%	+49%
West Virginia	11,270	+34%	+87%

These growth stories are in contrast to state virtual schools that have seen their enrollments drop in one or both of the last two years. Florida Virtual School (FLVS) is still by far the largest state virtual school in the country; however, it saw its enrollments drop this year for the first time in its history. It served 377,508 supplemental course completions to 192,820 unique students in SY 2013–14, decreases of 8% and 7% respectively. FLVS is unusual among state virtual schools in that it also offers a full-time option to a large number of students (5,104). Florida SB1514 (2013)[42] changed the funding structure for all schools, traditional and virtual, including FLVS. Previously, districts received full funding for up to six courses for each student, and FLVS received funding for all courses completed by students, whether that was a student's sixth course or courses beyond one FTE. With the passage of SB1514, students can no longer generate more than one FTE; instead, a student's FTE is distributed proportionally by the department of education to each district (FLVS is considered a district) for as many courses as a student takes. This created an incentive for districts to encourage students to take in-district traditional or virtual courses as they potentially can lose money if students take any out-of-district courses, or if a student takes a virtual course and does not complete it, thereby not generating funding. The funding changes and an increase in the number of online options available to students at the district level resulted in reduced enrollments for the first time in FLVS history, and an increase in enrollments in the district-run options, including FLVS franchises. The total supplemental course enrollments served in Florida, however, stayed relatively flat after years of double-digit growth, primarily in FLVS courses.

Utah and Louisiana saw their state virtual school enrollments drop due to policy changes as well.

- Utah's state virtual school (the Electronic High School) served 4,817 students, a decrease of 117%, in SY 2013–14, while the number of districts offering online courses via the Statewide Online Education Program (SOEP) increased. SOEP is among the first and best-known course choice programs in the country, but the program is still quite small (though growing), serving 3,208 course enrollments (or 6,416 quarter credits) in SY 2013–14, an increase of 236% from the previous year. For SY 2014–15 SOEP students may enroll in up to four credits online per year. SOEP opened up to private and homeschooled students in SY 2014–15, and as of August 2014 these comprised 50% of student enrollments.
- From 2000 through 2013, Louisiana had a state virtual school, Louisiana Virtual School (LVS). In 2012, Act 2 (HB976) enacted sweeping reforms to public K–12 education, including initial implementation of the Course Choice program, which replaced LVS.[43] With SB179 (2014),[44] Course Choice has been replaced by the Supplemental Course Academy (SCA), through which high school courses are offered. Funding is now through the Minimum Foundation Program (MFP), provided as an incremental funding

[42] Florida SB1514 (2013); http://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2013/1514/BillText/er/PDF
[43] Louisiana HB976 (Act 2); http://www.legis.la.gov/Legis/BillInfo.aspx?i=220608
[44] Louisiana SB179 (Act 482); http://www.legis.la.gov/legis/ViewDocument.aspx?d=913666

stream in addition to the regular public education funding formula. During the transition from LVS to Course Choice and now SCA, the number of student enrollments in supplemental courses (online and other) decreased by 61%, from 6,414 in SY 2012–13 to 2,479 course enrollments in SY 2013–14.

See Table 4 for examples of state virtual schools whose enrollments dropped in SY 2013–14.

Table 4: State virtual schools that are shrinking

State	Course enrollments SY 2013–14	Annual change SY 2011–12 to SY 2012–13	Annual change SY 2012–13 to SY 2013–14
Colorado	914	-36%	-9%
Hawaii	1,514	-1%	-17%
Iowa	1,201	-13%	-3%
Mississippi	2,360	-8%	-24%
Texas	5,708	+102%	-50%
Utah	4,741	-15%	-54%

In addition, some state virtual schools have seen erratic fluctuations in enrollments.

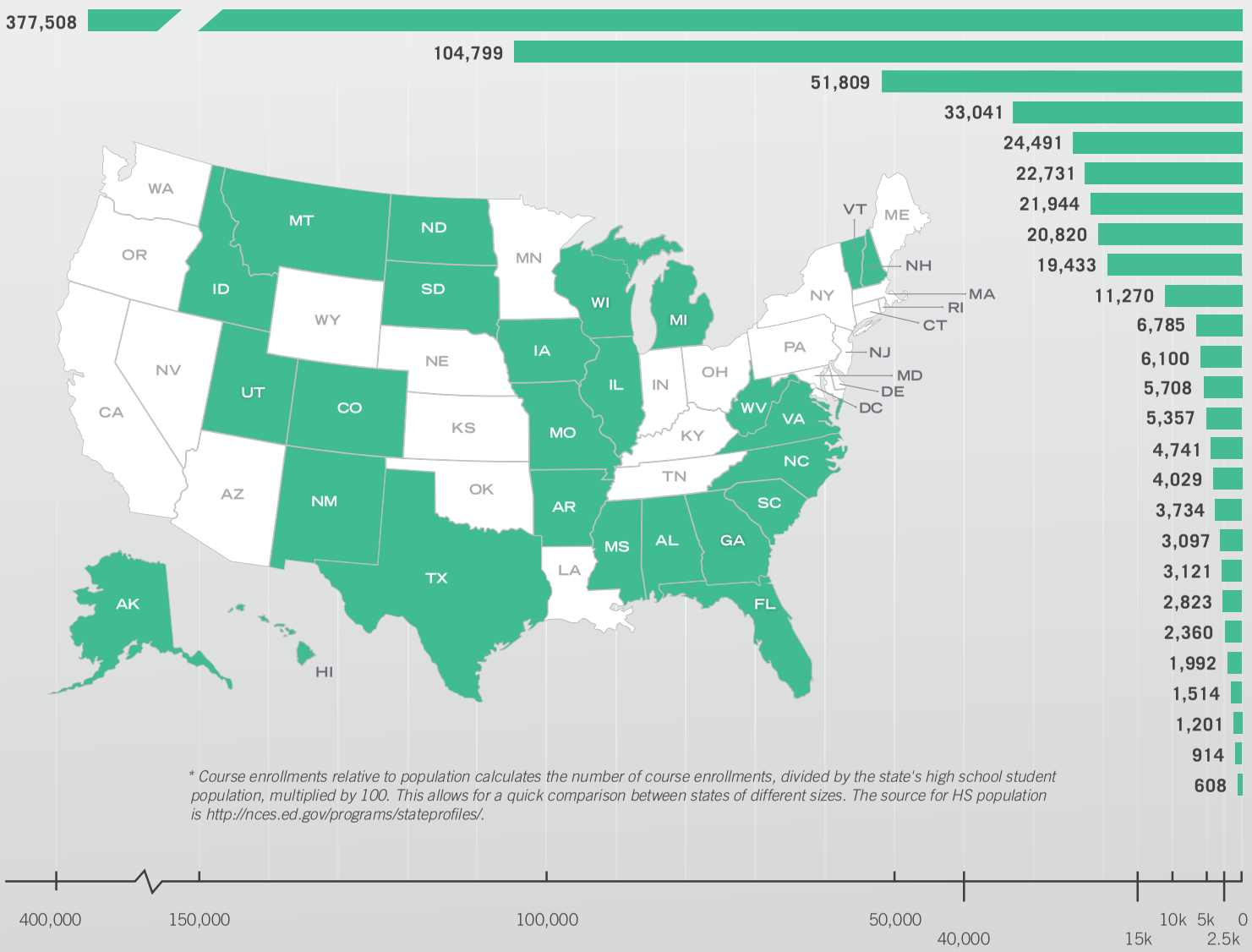
- The Texas Virtual School Network (TxVSN) saw an enrollment increase of 102% in SY 2012–13, and then a 50% drop in SY 2013–14, possibly due to changes in funding and competition from district programs.
- Montana Digital Academy had an 18% increase in course enrollments in SY 2013–13 and a 15% decrease in SY 2013–14, primarily due to a change in its credit recovery model that increased course completions but decreased the number of courses students could take at one time.

See Figure 1 for enrollment and growth information about all state virtual schools across the country.

2014

States with State Virtual Schools

FIGURE 1: COURSE ENROLLMENTS IN STATE VIRTUAL SCHOOLS



State	SVS course enrollments SY 2013–14	SVS YoY change from 2013	Course enrollments relative to population*
FL	377,508	-8%	48%
NC	104,799	+11%	24%
AL	51,809	0%	24%
GA	33,041	+28%	7%
SC	24,491	+46%	12%
NH	22,731	+29%	37%
MI	21,944	+5%	4%
ID	20,820	+9%	25%
VA	19,433	+49%	5%
WV	11,270	+87%	14%
MT	6,785	-15%	16%
ND	6,100	+91%	20%
TX	5,708	-50%	0%
WI	5,357	+6%	2%
UT	4,741	-54%	3%
SD	4,029	-1%	11%
AR	3,734	+87%	3%
IL	3,097	+3%	0%
NM	3,121	+5%	3%
VT	2,823	+188%	10%
MS	2,360	-24%	2%
MO	1,992	+23%	1%
HI	1,514	-17%	3%
IA	1,201	-3%	1%
CO	914	-9%	0%
AK	608	+82%	2%

** Course enrollments relative to population calculates the number of course enrollments, divided by the state's high school student population, multiplied by 100. This allows for a quick comparison between states of different sizes. The source for HS population is http://nces.ed.gov/programs/stateprofiles/.*

National Online Learning Snapshot

Table 5 presents all 50 states and Washington, DC rated in six categories of online learning activity: fully online and supplemental online options for elementary, middle, and high school students.

For each category we assigned one of four ratings:

Available to ALL students **Available to MOST students** **Available to SOME students** **NOT available**

Ratings are based on the existence and attributes of online programs, state policy, and funding, and the proportion of the student population that took part in online courses and schools during SY 2013–14.

The rating for each category in each state is based on a mix of objective metrics and subjective determination; 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 they will have access to these opportunities?*

The primary question was then subdivided into several sub-questions:

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 might 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 recognize that our knowledge of policies is imperfect, so we looked at online school and program size relative to the state's school-age population to determine whether barriers, of which we are unaware, might exist. The percentage of the school-age population taking part in online learning in a handful of states with well-known and successful online schools (e.g., Florida) 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 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 that have significant online programs that are not available across all grades or locations were particularly challenging. A rating with no people displayed 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 5: National snapshot of online learning activity

Ratings are 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 SY 2013–14.

	SUPPLEMENTAL			FULLY ONLINE		
State GRADES >	K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)	K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)
Alabama						
The state virtual school, ACCESS, is among the largest in the country. There are no statewide fully online schools, though the first district virtual high schools opened in SY 2013–14.						
Alaska						
Alaska's Learning Network provides supplemental courses and is available to all districts in the state; there are few fully online schools.						
Arizona						
Arizona Online Instruction (AOI) program has approved 21 online charter schools and 66 districts to offer part- and full-time options; AOI served 48,357 part- and full-time students in SY 2012–13, the most recent year for which data are available.						
Arkansas						
Virtual Arkansas, the state virtual school, served 3,734 students in SY 2013–14. One full-time virtual charter school served 1,334 students in grades K–8.						
California						
Many online and blended district and charter schools serve students statewide. Although online schools are restricted by contiguous counties requirement, some educational management companies have strategically placed virtual charters so that all students in the state have access.						
Colorado						
56 approved full-time and supplemental programs serve students, including Colorado Online Learning, the state virtual school. Full-time online schools and programs enrolled 16,215 students in SY 2013–14.						
Connecticut						
Public Act (PA) No. 10-111 (2010) allowed online learning to be used for credit; one state-led program offers supplemental courses at the high school level. There are no fully online schools.						
Delaware						
No major online programs. An online world language program offered by the DOE served 350 students in 7th and 8th grades in SY 2013–14. There are no fully online schools.						
Florida						
Florida is the first state to provide full- and part-time funded options to all students in grades K–12; an estimated 240,000 students took at least one online class in SY 2013–14. FLVS is the largest state virtual school; it successfully served 377,508 supplemental course enrollments in SY 2013–14.						
Georgia						
Georgia Virtual School served 33,041 course enrollments in SY 2013–14. Three statewide fully online schools enrolled 18,035 students in SY 2013–14, a 34% increase over the previous year. District programs growing in number and size.						
Hawaii						
Hawaii Virtual Learning Network is responsible for expanding online offerings throughout the state and includes the state virtual school. There are two blended schools, Hawaii Technology Academy (HTA) and Myron B. Thompson Academy (MBTA).						
Idaho						
Idaho has a large state virtual school with 20,820 course enrollments in SY 2013–14, a 9% increase over the previous year. Eight fully online schools operating in SY 2014–15.						
Illinois						
Illinois Virtual School is the state virtual school. HB3937 (2014) amended HB494 (2013) to extend the ban on fully online schools through December 31, 2016, but does not impact existing virtual programs, none of which are statewide.						

	SUPPLEMENTAL			FULLY ONLINE		
State GRADES >	K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)	K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)
Indiana						
There were 7,603 students enrolled in five fully online schools in SY 2013–14, a 13% increase over the previous year. A number of educational service centers, districts and institutions provided at least 18,000 supplemental course enrollments in SY 2013–14.						
Iowa						
Iowa Learning Online and Iowa Online AP Academy are the state virtual schools. Iowa has two fully online schools, Iowa Connections Academy and Iowa Virtual Academy.						
Kansas						
There are 11 virtual schools, three virtual charter schools, two charter schools with virtual programs, 69 district / building programs, and eight service center programs serving students with supplemental and fully online options.						
Kentucky						
The state closed its state virtual school, Kentucky Virtual Schools, in 2012, redirecting enrollments to other supplemental district programs. JCPSeSchool is the largest district program in the state						
Louisiana						
The statewide Supplemental Course Academy (SCA) opened in SY 2014–15. It replaced the Course Choice program, which served 2,479 course enrollments in SY 2013–14, its only year of operation following closure of Louisiana Virtual School, the state virtual school. Two fully online charter schools operate in the state.						
Maine						
Maine Online Learning Program had 9 approved providers that served an estimated 1,700 course enrollments in SY 2013–14. Maine's first online charter school launched in SY 2014–15.						
Maryland						
State program provides online services to districts. SB674 (2012) set requirements for the state department of education (MSDE) to create guidelines for course review, and required the MSDE to approve all online courses. No fully online schools.						
Massachusetts						
Two statewide virtual schools operate in SY 2014–15 under authorization from a 2013 Commonwealth Virtual Schools law. An estimated 2.5% of the state's high school population takes class through The Virtual High School (VHS).						
Michigan						
Michigan Virtual School (MVS) is one of the larger state virtual schools, with 21,944 course enrollments in SY 2013–14. Michigan has eight cyber charter schools operating in SY 2014–15. PA196 (2014) allows students in grades 6–12 to take up to two online courses per academic term without district approval.						
Minnesota						
Many online charter schools and district programs offer part- and full-time options; 27 providers approved by the department of education.						
Mississippi						
Mississippi Virtual Public School, the state virtual school, served 2,360 course enrollments in SY 2013–14. No other major programs exist.						
Missouri						
Programs including the Missouri Virtual Instruction program (MoVIP, the state virtual school), District's Choice Online Learning, Mizzou K–12 Online, and other district programs offer supplemental courses primarily on a tuition model. There are no full-time online public options.						
Montana						
Montana Digital Academy, the state virtual school, served 6,785 course enrollments in SY 2013–14. A few small district supplemental programs exist. There are no fully online schools.						

State	GRADES >	SUPPLEMENTAL			FULLY ONLINE		
		K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)	K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)
Nebraska			●	●			
The Nebraska BlendED Initiative offers blended courses to grades 3–12; University of Nebraska High School offers asynchronous core, elective, and AP courses to students.							
Nevada			●	●	●	●	●
The department of education has approved district online programs in 16 out of 17 school districts for SY 2014–15. The Nevada Virtual Academy (Clark County School District) served 29,829 supplemental course enrollments and 700 fully online students in SY 2013–14.							
New Hampshire			●	●		●	
The Virtual Learning Academy Charter School (VLACS) served 22,731 course enrollments in grades 6–12, and 162 fully online students in grades 9–12; it acts as the de facto state virtual school. 20 middle and high schools (19%) are part of The Virtual High School.							
New Jersey				●			
New Jersey Virtual School and the NJeSchool offer supplemental courses for a fee to students; two blended charter schools opened in SY 2012–13.							
New Mexico			●	●	●	●	
IDEAL-New Mexico is the state virtual school; some district programs, including Albuquerque Public Schools' eCADEMY VIRTUAL with over 8,400 course enrollments during SY 2013–14. There are two fully online schools operating in SY 2014–15.							
New York				●			
Supplemental online courses are delivered through many BOCES and school districts, and in New York City (whose iLearnNYC program reported 76,408 digital course enrollments in SY 2013–14) in particular. Online AP courses are available through the state's Virtual Advanced Placement program.							
North Carolina			●	●			
North Carolina Virtual Public School has the second highest number of enrollments of any state virtual school (104,799 in SY 2013–14); there are no fully online schools operating in SY 2014–15. Appropriations Bill 744 (2014) authorized the piloting of two virtual charter schools beginning with SY 2015–16.							
North Dakota			●	●			
North Dakota Center for Distance Education provides supplemental online courses to middle and high school students (primarily the latter); student enrollment increased by 91% in SY 2013–14.							
Ohio			●	●	●	●	●
27 e-schools served 39,044 students in SY 2013–14. ilearnOhio is a state program that guides students to supplemental online courses from approved providers.							
Oklahoma				●	●	●	●
The Oklahoma Supplemental Online Course Program guides students to supplemental online classes, and four online schools serve students statewide.							
Oregon			●	●	●	●	●
Oregon has fully online schools, district-level part- and full-time online programs, and the Oregon Virtual School District, a state program.							
Pennsylvania				●	●	●	●
14 cyber charters served 36,596 students in SY 2013–14. Many school districts and independent units (IU) are now offering online classes and / or programs.							
Rhode Island				●			
Northern Rhode Island Collaborative offers 80 online courses to grades 3–12 and 24% of middle and high schools in the state participate in The Virtual High School. At least four blended schools are operating in SY 2014–15.							

State GRADES >	SUPPLEMENTAL K-5 (ES)	SUPPLEMENTAL 6-8 (MS)	SUPPLEMENTAL 9-12 (HS)	FULLY ONLINE K-5 (ES)	FULLY ONLINE 6-8 (MS)	FULLY ONLINE 9-12 (HS)
South Carolina						
South Carolina Virtual School Program, the state virtual school, served 24,491 course enrollments; there are seven full-time virtual charter schools and some district programs.						
South Dakota						
South Dakota Virtual School (SDVS) is a consortium of course providers approved by the state department of education. There are also a statewide virtual alternative school and other statewide programs that focus on career and technical education and advanced courses via SDVS.						
Tennessee						
Tennessee has one fully online statewide school, at least two blended schools, and several district programs including Metro Nashville Public Schools, Memphis Virtual School, and Hamilton County Virtual School.						
Texas						
The Texas Virtual School Network (TxVSN) statewide course catalog served 5,708 course enrollments in SY 2013–14; a 50% decrease from the previous year. The TxVSN Online Schools (OLS) program served 10,258 students in fully online schools in grades 3–12 in SY 2013–14, a 22% increase.						
Utah						
Four fully online statewide schools and many district programs offer courses through the Statewide Online Education Program. Utah Electronic High School, among the first state virtual schools in the country, served 4,741 course enrollments in SY 2013–14.						
Vermont						
Vermont Virtual Learning Cooperative, the state virtual school, served 2,707 enrollments in SY 2013–14. 44% of high schools participate in The Virtual High School.						
Virginia						
Virtual Virginia is the state virtual school program; 23 providers who may provide multidivision fully online, supplemental, or blended courses through local school boards are approved for SY 2014–15.						
Washington						
In SY 2012–13, 94 providers served 23,466 course enrollments to students in part- and full-time programs.						
Washington DC						
Students in K–12 have many blended learning options, and a fully online charter school serves students in grades K–8.						
West Virginia						
West Virginia Virtual School is the state virtual school; it served 11,270 course enrollments, and uses third-party course providers and local teacher facilitators. Few other options exist.						
Wisconsin						
Wisconsin Virtual School, the state virtual school, and the Wisconsin eSchool Network, a consortium of 19 districts, comprise the Wisconsin Digital Learning Collaborative. 32 virtual charters are authorized to operate in SY 2014–15. Course Options provision allow students to take two funded online courses.						
Wyoming						
The Wyoming Switchboard Network delivers numerous fully online and supplemental options to K–12 students, through approved statewide, single-district, and postsecondary distance education providers.						

Snapshots of Digital Learning in School Districts

As part of *Keeping Pace's* research into school districts' digital learning efforts (discussed in more detail in the previous "Public School Districts" section), we examined the digital learning initiatives of seven public school districts: Clark County, NV; Horry County, SC; Minnetonka, MN; New Albany, OH; New Orleans, LA; Oakland, CA; and Washington, DC (see Table 6).

We chose these districts based on several factors, including the following:

- They cover a range of sizes that are representative of school districts nationally. Clark County is among the largest districts in the country, with more than 300,000 students. The smallest two in our sample have about 4,500 and 10,000 students, and the other three are between about 30,000 and 45,000 students.
- They are diverse in several ways. Collectively the districts represent most major regions of the country, include a mix of urban and suburban districts, have high school graduation rates ranging from 63% to 99%, and report rates at which students qualify for free or reduced-price lunch from 6% to 91%.
- Most have received some attention from media, advocacy organizations, or foundations, for their digital learning initiatives. Several have received grants supporting digital learning from one or more foundations, their states, and/or Next Generation Learning Challenges. We chose New Orleans because, as a district in which almost all students are attending—or will soon attend—charter schools—it is demonstrating a different approach, but one that may be copied in smaller scale by districts taking advantage of the flexibility of innovation zones in some states.

We do not believe that these districts are representative of district activity in general. We believe that the profiled districts are engaged in more digital learning activity than the average district, partly because our research into district activity suggests that most districts don't have as much activity as these do, and partly because these districts have received competitive grant funding to implement digital learning. The profiled districts are all planning and implementing digital learning at the district level, which may augment digital learning activity at the school or classroom level.

While these particular districts are above average in terms of digital learning activity, we do not suggest that they are the most advanced in the country. There are many other districts with levels of digital learning activity that approach or surpass the activity detailed in this section.

The profiles detail the ways in which digital learning is being implemented, and use existing data to explore to the extent possible how many students are being reached by these initiatives, and in what ways.

Key findings across the profiles include the following:

- Most of these districts have multiple digital learning initiatives, which typically include some that are fully online (e.g., district-run virtual schools) and others that are based on existing classrooms and school schedules. In some cases districts are redesigning entire schools, although in some cases whole school redesigns begin with one grade level.
- The impetus for key digital learning initiatives differs among districts, but in several districts the move to online national assessments (Smarter Balanced and PARCC) caused the districts to acquire computers. Educators realized they had a large number of computers whose only required use was for the national or state assessments, and sought ways to use the computers for instruction.
- Variations exist among the districts—and sometimes among initiatives within districts—regarding the extent to which content and teaching is obtained from outside providers, versus being developed or provided by the districts themselves. Math and ELA skills software that is often used in elementary

grades is always acquired from providers, but content used in learning management systems, and even fully online courses, may be purchased or developed in house.

- All districts required infrastructure upgrades to handle the level of online content delivery and communications required by digital learning.

Perhaps the most important overarching finding is that among these districts, several of whom are considered among the leading examples of digital learning implementations, in many cases the percentage of overall instructional time that is based on digital content and tools is low. Although many of these districts have been implementing digital instruction for several years or more, typically they are still in relatively early stages of rolling out initiatives to schools and students across the district and will continue for several years to come.

Table 6: School districts profiled

Name Location	Student population	Graduation rate	Free / Reduced-price meals percentage	Digital initiatives
Clark County School District Las Vegas, NV	311,000	72%	66%	Fully online school for all Nevada students through Nevada Learning Academy. Built in house blended and online professional development program for all staff members. Blended learning through vendor content in middle and high schools. Mobile device 1:1 initiative in nine Title I middle schools.
District of Columbia Public Schools Washington, DC	46,500	64%	58%	Eight fully blended schools in a feeder pattern to ensure blended learning continuum. Full-time blended learning manager to ensure continued development of blended learning schools. Middle school math instruction is blended across the district and uses digital content. Credit recovery program is delivered in a blended format.
Horry County Public Schools Conway, SC	40,500	78%	63%	Personalized Digital Learning Initiative will make the district 1:1 by SY 2015–16 in grades 3–12. Horry County Virtual School offers full-time and supplemental online courses for students. Whittemore Park Middle School is implementing a full school turnaround using blended learning with the support of Next Generation Learning Challenges.
Minnetonka Public Schools Minneapolis, MN	9,624	99%	6%	Tablet 1:1 program in grades 7–12. Tonka Online offers fully online courses for students. Computer programming classes in grades K–5 teach all students to code.
New Albany – Plain Local Schools Columbus, OH	4,414	98%	8%	Offers 17 blended courses for high school students where they only attend face-to-face classes one to two times per week. Blended learning program developed as part of the Ohio Board of Regents (formerly eTech Ohio) blended learning grant in 2012. Designed and implemented year-long professional development program for new blended teachers.
New Orleans Public Schools New Orleans, LA	29,632	73%	91%	Significant majority of district students attend charter schools. ReNEW and FirstLine are just two of the charter schools that offer innovative personalized learning models. Breakthrough Schools: New Orleans is investing $6 million through 2017 to develop more personalized learning models in New Orleans charter schools.
Oakland Unified School District Oakland, CA	37,040	63%	71%	Blended learning pilot in 8 schools with support of Rogers Family Foundation. Chromebooks funded by Common Core funds brings device to student ratio to 2:1 average across buildings as of spring 2014.

DISTRICT SNAPSHOT

Clark County School District

Las Vegas, Nevada

Enrollment: 314,000 students
Serves 71% of Nevada students

Total Number of Schools:

357

- 217 Elementary Schools
- 59 Middle Schools
- 49 High Schools
- 24 Alternative Schools
- 8 Special Schools

Free / Reduced-price Lunch: 66%

Graduation Rate: 71.5%

Clark County School District (CCSD), the 5th largest school district in the U.S., is taking a multi-tiered approach to digital learning that includes both online and classroom-based elements:

- Nevada Learning Academy (NLA) offers a full-time online school, as well as supplemental online courses including 78 high school courses and 27 middle school courses. In SY 2013–14 NLA served 700 full-time students and 12,096 part-time students with 29,829 supplemental online courses. Of the nearly 13,000 total students that NLA serves, 200 never visit a CCSD school, and the rest either take proctored exams at the NLA building, or take courses from computer labs in various schools and take proctored exams at those schools. This latter approach is most common among middle school students. NLA started in 2004 as the Clark County School District Virtual High School and is available to students across the district (in the fully online or partly online format), as well as to students across Nevada. NLA has one principal and two associate principals, one for middle school students and one for high school students.
- High schools and middle schools use digital content and tools from five different vendors. They total about 21,500 course enrollments at the high school level and 11,000 at the middle school level.
- Nine middle schools are participating in the e3 project (Engage, Empower, Explore), which provides one-to-one mobile learning to students in Title I schools. Schools participating in this program were selected from a competitive application process with a goal of ensuring that the entire school team is ready to make the change to blended learning. The focus of e3 is on devices and the learning management system, and not on specific content.
- CCSD adopted a district-wide BYOD policy that gives principals and teachers autonomy over allowing student devices for learning in the classroom. This effort has been most widely implemented at the secondary level, but ongoing support and communication is helping to advance BYOD across the district.

All of the online and blended initiatives at CCSD are focused on ensuring increased student success and graduation. For example, recent changes to Nevada graduation requirements meant that several hundred students would not be able to graduate on time. CCSD responded by implementing a summer program that allowed over 300 students to earn their high school diploma over the summer through digital learning options. The summer graduation program allows students who need more time to finish course work or who are credit deficient the opportunity to earn credits and graduate just a few months behind their classmates.

DIGITAL CONTENT AND TOOLS

Middle and high schools across the district use digital content in physical classrooms and computer labs extensively. The district uses five different vendors to provide digital content. The ways in which digital content is being used varies depending on the vendor and school, although all fall under one of two basic categories. In one approach, students use digital content in computer labs with an adult coach (not necessarily a teacher licensed in the content area) who assists students with their online learning as needed. The other approach is a content lab, where students who are taking a course in the same content area are scheduled in the same lab and a teacher from that content area is available for support. The two most highly used content products are used across the district, with schools being given the option to use them. The other three products are site-specific and used in several schools. In addition, in four high schools, all freshmen are taking

a virtual lab course for health and 9th grade computers. In SY 2013–14 some of the 9th grade students used the vendor-provided health course while over 1,000 others piloted the health course designed by NLA.

NLA began its program with purchased content but is transitioning to building its own content because it believes that curriculum that supports the district's values and mission is key, and that can only be achieved by building its own content. It develops courses based on their demand across the district, for example prioritizing the development of an online health course over a new world language course. Course development takes 12–18 months.

The district is currently partnering with the CK–12 Foundation to build middle school math courses. These courses will be used in all district schools and freely available to others through the Foundation. After math is completed, they will start on middle school science courses.

The district believes that an enterprise level learning management system (LMS) that provides a seamless interface for teachers and students is a requirement for a large-scale digital learning implementation. In April 2013, CCSD adopted a district-wide LMS to standardize the teacher and student online learning experience. Prior to this adoption teachers were using a variety of free LMS options in the classrooms. To speed LMS classroom adoption, CCSD provided course templates and customized district icons to teachers that made course building easier for traditional teachers.

TEACHING AND STAFFING

NLA uses 34 full-time faculty, 10 of whom are off-site, and a handful of part-time faculty for specialty courses with low enrollments. There are a number of additional CCSD teachers who have expressed interest in joining the NLA staff and teaching online. The Academy maintains a list of district staff who are ready to make the transition to online teaching when a spot opens up. Other courses using digital content use existing CCSD teachers and coaches. CCSD offers an online professional development course in blended and online teaching. District staff can take this course for a nominal fee and gain the skills that they need to be successful in reaching students with technology. CCSD credits their professional development course with the high demand for online teaching positions.

CCSD believes that deliberate and meaningful professional development is among the most important elements of implementing digital learning. CCSD started its own in-house professional development program in SY 2011–12. Teachers can take one of nine different CCSD blended professional development courses to learn how to become or improve as a blended or online teacher. Course enrollment has increased each year and more than doubled in the past few years. Seven hundred teachers completed the course in SY 2011–12, and 1,500 teachers completing the course in SY 2013–14.

CONCLUSION

Clark County School District is an example of a large district that has implemented multiple digital learning initiatives. It has built on the success and knowledge gained from the online school that has operated for a decade, and is now creating extensive classroom-based digital learning. Unlike some other districts (both large and small), it is prioritizing creating its own online content, starting with its highest enrollment courses.

KEY DIGITAL LEARNING COMPONENTS

Nevada Learning Academy (NLA)

Launched in fall 2004 as Clark County School District Virtual High School

Serves students statewide

700 full-time students in SY 2013-14

12,796 part-time students totaling 29,829 semester course enrollments

e3 – Engage, Empower, Explore Project

Title I One-to-One Mobile Learning Project

9 middle schools have 1:1 programs using tablets

All core instruction uses digital content and tools

Digital content and tools

District policy allows BYOD in all grades

District uses five content vendors who provide a variety of content in core courses to middle and high school students

DISTRICT SNAPSHOT

District of Columbia Public Schools

Washington, DC

Enrollment: 46,500 students

Total Number of Schools:

111
- 66 Elementary Schools
- 29 Middle Schools
- 16 High Schools

Free / Reduced-price Lunch: 76%

Graduation Rate: 58%

District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) has implemented digital instruction in three main areas:

- Whole school redesigns of a total of eight schools using extensive digital instruction.
- A dozen initiatives using digital content in many subjects, across all grades levels, in all district schools.
- Credit recovery that is offered in a blended format in which content is delivered online and students meet with teachers two to three times a week.

Beginning in fall 2012, DCPS began blended learning in eight schools using a feeder pattern (4 elementary, 3 middle, and 1 high school). The district brought in two groups of outside experts to help design digital instruction in these schools, and because of the mix of schools (each making some autonomous decisions) and different grade levels, the implementations vary in significant ways.

In two of the elementary schools, students move through three instructional blocks in literacy and math. One block is direct or small group instruction with the teacher, one block involves working with digital content, and the third block may be either, but is often focused on independent reading or collaboration with other students. In these schools, teachers help select digital content and receive professional development from a Technology Instructional Coach who is shared by the schools. Professional development focuses on helping teachers analyze and use the data being produced by the digital content.

The redesigned middle school is focused on math instruction and is using a different approach than that used by the elementary schools. All students have a laptop that allows them to move through the content at their own pace, with support from a team of teachers. The middle school uses different digital content providers than the elementary schools, a different outside expert who advised on the instructional design, and a staffing model that is unlike any other school in the district. All students are assessed at the end of each day to determine what math topics they will focus on the next day, and how. Instruction is done directly with a teacher, with digital content used independently or with peers.

In addition to the blended school redesigns, students in grades 6–12 use online courses for remediation, credit recovery, and acceleration.

DIGITAL CONTENT AND TOOLS

In addition to the digital content and tools used in the blended schools, a variety of initiatives across the district use digital content in math, literacy, language development, science, social studies, and world languages. Content selections are made primarily at the district level. Students access digital content from schools, homes, libraries, and other locations. Digital content includes the following:

- Three math providers are collectively used in grades K–9 in most elementary and middle schools, for 11.5 hours per week in sessions that range from 10–45 minutes each.
- Two English language arts content providers are used. One is used in 17 schools in grades preK–5, and used for up to 1.5 hours per week in 20-minute sessions. Content from the other provider is used in 27 schools in grades preK–8 for one hour per week in 20 minute sessions.
- A world language supplement is used in grades 4–8 for 1.5 hours per week.
- Digital textbooks are being piloted in social studies and science courses for grades 6–9 in five schools. The district has set aside funds to expand the use of digital textbooks to 30 additional schools, pending results of the pilot.
- A learning management system is used in grades 6–12 in four schools.

Significant technology infrastructure upgrades were needed throughout the district, and especially in the blended schools, including installation of wireless network capabilities and increased bandwidth. Schools across the district, including the redesigned schools, use a variety of devices including tablets, desktop computers, and laptop computers. The elementary-level redesigned schools have students rotating through instructional models and therefore do not need devices for all students at the same time. The redesigned math program at the middle school requires laptops for all students. A total of $10 million has been spent in the past year to purchase new devices and implement a four-year refresh cycle for technology, including upgrading labs, teacher devices, and any other outdated computers across the district.

Although the district is focused on school redesigns and the use of digital content and tools for instructional reasons, in many cases technology requirements for the new national online assessments—DCPS is using The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC)—are driving the device decision-making process for devices and infrastructure. The digital learning changes are able to build on, and take advantage of, those technology improvements.

TEACHING AND STAFFING

Existing classroom teachers are implementing blended learning in the redesigned schools, and 13 instructional technology coaches were hired in 2014 to support the blended classroom teachers. The instructional technology coaches work with teachers in all DCPS buildings to help them integrate digital content and technology tools. DCPS has a blended learning manager who is located in the office of teaching and learning. DCPS believes that technology is a core part of education, and the merger of instruction and technology is essential to allowing students to have ownership in their learning.

Teacher evaluators in blended learning schools had to be retrained on evaluation techniques that were applicable to the blended learning classroom. Teachers and administrators were concerned about what impact blended learning might have on the existing evaluation system, and as a result the system was updated to address the concerns.

BUDGET AND FUNDING

DCPS supports its blended learning rollout through a variety of grants, including $2 million from Next Generation Learning Challenges and the CityBridge Foundation, which is working to create a system of high-performing schools in Washington, DC. Funds were allocated in the annual budget to support blended learning; no additional tax revenue was needed implement the program. DCPS also receives a significant amount of fiscal and in-kind support from the local government and businesses that have helped to bring blended learning to life.

CONCLUSION

The redesign of the first set of blended schools is part of the larger district strategy to implement blended learning in more schools across the district. DCPS has found that it needs to add additional professional development time for teachers, to allow time for them to understand the instructional approach using digital content and tools, and also to select the content they wish to use, and become comfortable with it. In addition the district is considering how to establish routines for students transitioning between instructional modes in classrooms. As with other blended schools, moving from a traditional classroom in which students are being instructed by the teacher for most of the class period, to one in which they are partially self-directed and moving between stations, requires different classroom management techniques as well as varied pedagogical methods.

KEY DIGITAL LEARNING COMPONENTS

Digital Content

The district has created a dozen initiatives built around use of digital content

Digital content is used in math, literacy, science, social studies, and world languages

60 elementary and middle schools (20,000 students) are using digital content in math

40 elementary schools (13,400 students) are using digital content in literacy

Blended Schools

The district is creating whole-school redesigns using blended learning

In SY 2014-15 the district has the following blended schools:

- 4 elementary (K-5) blended 61% of the day
- 3 middle schools (6-8) blended 25%–100% of the day
- 1 high school (9-12) blended 50% of the day

Credit Recovery

All DCPS credit recovery classes combine online and face-to-face instruction

Content is delivered online and students meet with teachers 2–3 times a week for targeted instruction and support

DISTRICT SNAPSHOT

Horry County Schools

Conway, South Carolina

Enrollment: 40,500 students
(3rd largest district in South Carolina)

Total Number of Schools:

55
- 27 Elementary Schools
- 11 Middle Schools
- 10 High Schools
- 7 Charter and Alternative Schools

Free / Reduced-price Lunch: 63%

Graduation Rate: 77.7%

Horry County Schools (HCS) offers and is further developing a set of digital learning options that include the following:

- Continuing roll-out of district-wide Personalized Digital Learning, extending from middle school in early 2014 to high school in fall 2014, and expanding to grades 3–5 in all 27 elementary schools in 2015.
- A low-performing, high-poverty middle school (Whittemore Park) that the district is turning around using blended learning in a competency-based learning setting.
- The Horry County Virtual School (HCVS), which provides supplemental online high school courses to district students. It offers both original credit and credit recovery courses and totaled 3,500 course enrollments in SY 2013–14.

HCS has been recognized for its innovation and has received support from outside the district. It has received funding from Next Generation Learning Challenges, and is part of the League of Innovative Schools run by Digital Promise.

Several efforts in place in the district have supported the move to digital learning. HCS has traditionally relied heavily on data to differentiate classroom instruction, using the Northwest Evaluation Association's (NWEA) Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) as well as state assessments to track student progress. Regular administrative meetings were often used as professional learning opportunities to discuss data and student progress, and teachers and administrators frequently collaborated to make meaningful use of student data to improve outcomes. During these collaborations, district staff decided that blended learning was the logical "next step in the journey."

In 2013, HCS decided to move to personalized digital learning for all of its students over the course of the next three years. Because district leaders believed that teachers and students should have a role in designing how digital learning would be implemented in each school, design teams of students, parents, teachers, and administrators were formed at schools across the district, and implementation varies between schools.

To augment the district's efforts, it received a Next Generation Learning Challenges (NGLC) grant in October 2012 to help its efforts to use digital learning to turn around Whittemore Park Middle School. In fall 2013 the school implemented the iCAN (individualized, college and career readiness, aspirations of students, and network of support) model designed to blend core subjects and provide an increased level of student support. Fluid groups of about 100 students meet with four academic teachers for 300 minutes each day. About 75% of that time is digital learning instruction. Each week students also meet in advisory groups that are static and experience a variety of exploratory classes. The school is located in an urban setting where over 85% of the students participate in the free and reduced lunch program.

DIGITAL LEARNING CONTENT AND TOOLS

A wide array of digital content is used in Horry County Virtual School (HCVS), and in its personal digital learning based schools. All core middle school subjects use digital content. The district started with English language arts and math and has expanded to social studies and science, where digital textbooks are often utilized. The virtual school uses a mix of vendor-provided courses with those developed in the district. Most of this content is integrated with the district's learning management system. Students in grades 6–12 are being issued tablets, though the devices are different for the middle and high schools. The high school device has an integrated keyboard, while the middle school device does not. The school board has approved up to $600 per student per device.

TEACHING AND STAFFING

Teachers and administrators are participating in professional development to understand how to teach effectively in a blended learning classroom. In addition, six technology integration specialists were hired to support existing staff with the blended learning implementation. Each building has a curriculum coach who collaborates with digital integration specialists and content learning specialists to support blended learning in the classroom.

Most teaching at HCVS is through 15 part-time teachers, and for some low-enrollment courses the teaching and content are supplied by an outside provider. The district's executive director of online learning and instructional technology leads HCVS. A learning specialist for online learning and curriculum monitoring supports the director and handles day-to-day operations and enrollment requests. An administrative support/clerk position also plays an integral role in supporting HCVS administrators, teachers and students. These are the only three positions totally dedicated to HCVS. HCVS also receives as-needed support from the district's curriculum staff and the technology staff; however, these positions are not dedicated to HCVS.

Responsibility for the district's Personalized Digital Learning Initiative spans several departments. The chief academic officer and the executive director of online learning and instructional technology serve as project leads on the instructional side. The chief accountability/technology officer and executive director for technology serve as project leads on the hardware side. Although these positions already existed at HCS, the board approved six new positions to assist teachers in making the shift to blended learning. The six new digital integration specialists report directly to the executive director for online learning and instructional technology.

BUDGET AND FUNDING

General fund monies are used to cover most of the costs of implementing and executing blended learning. Student devices are purchased through a capital fund supported by a $.01 local sales tax.

CONCLUSION

HCS is putting into place an impressive district-wide plan for personalized digital learning that builds on previous use of data by district schools, widespread adoption of tablets for students in grades 3–12, a whole school turnaround based on digital learning, and a district virtual school. Initially digital options are focused on a broader range of middle school students than high school and elementary students. How digital options are adopted across most high schools and elementary schools will be determined by those schools in the next several years.

KEY DIGITAL LEARNING COMPONENTS

Horry County Virtual School

District-level online school that provides supplemental courses

Provides a full course load to a few students

Offers its own courses plus courses provided by the South Carolina Virtual School Program

In SY 2013-14 had 3,500 course enrollments for initial credit and credit recovery

Provides test preparation courses

Courses are self-paced; students may begin them at any time

Course completion rate ranges between 85–90% annually

Personalized Digital Learning rollout

January 2014: All MS students (10,000) received tablets for in-school use

All MS students use digital content in all core subjects

Whittemore Park Middle School undergoing turnaround focused on blended learning

Whittemore courses are 75% digital learning

August 2014: All HS students received tablets for use inside / outside school. The district target is 25% of all HS teachers will use blended learning in their courses. Each building has discretion on how they reach that target.

August 2015: Expansion to grades 3–5

DISTRICT SNAPSHOT

Minnetonka Public Schools (MPS)

Minnetonka, Minnesota

Enrollment: 9,624 students

Total Number of Schools:

9
- 6 Elementary Schools
- 2 Middle Schools
- 1 High School

Free / Reduced-price Lunch: 6%

Graduation Rate: 99%

Minnetonka Public Schools (MPS) has three main digital learning components that operate across district schools:

- A 1:1 tablet program that is reaching all students in grades 7–12 across the district.
- An online school, Tonka Online, which launched in summer 2014 and expanded to offer 10 courses in SY 2014–15.
- A K–5 computer programing initiative that includes a digital component.

With the three digital programs, MPS aims to reach most students in the district with digital learning options that are a mix of onsite and online. In addition, MPS attracts students from outside the district into its physical schools and digital courses.

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The MPS 1:1 tablet program launched as a pilot in fall 2011 with 340 of the district's 750 9th grade students across all courses. Data were collected to compare students' results with and without tablets. Students using tablets scored 2.35 points (on a 100 point scale) higher on math common assessments and 1 point higher on the science common assessment over their peers without tablets. When 10 courses taught by four teachers in the pilot were compared, 93% of students with tablets earned a "C" or better final grade compared to 84.7% of students without a tablet. The improved outcomes were likely based on a series of improvements in the mode of instruction that were facilitated by the use of the tablets with digital content. Teachers reported a 65% increase in the number of formative assessments that they were using in math, science, and English to personalize instruction for students with tablets. Eighty-one percent of teachers reported that the tablets led to increased communication, and 77% of students reported that they collaborated daily with other students. During the pilot, MPS observed that students with tablets accessed online content in the district's learning management system six times more often than students without tablets.

Based on these results, MPS decided to phase tablets in at the middle and high school levels. In SY 2014–15 all students in grades 7–12 are using tablets. In grades without 1:1 tablets (K–6), the student to device ratio is 5:1. This number includes a mix of tablets, laptops, and desktop computers. Schools with 1:1 programs have full, dense wireless coverage in every area of the building. For students without Internet access at home, MPS provides and pays for filtered broadband access via their tablet from home.

Separately from the 1:1 tablet rollout, the district created an initiative to provide supplemental online courses. Tonka Online was launched in summer 2014 with 30 students taking their first online course (physical education). MPS students may take a Tonka Online course as a part of their regular high school schedule or as an overload course. Students who take the course as an overload are charged $195 per semester. Students may take up to two online courses each semester with guidance counselor approval. In fall 2014, Tonka Online is offering Microsoft applications, quadratic algebra, geometry, higher algebra, pre-calculus, lifetime fitness and activities, AP environmental science, contemporary U.S. history, and AP psychology. Courses are designed to be rigorous in nature, and model the best practices of MPS face-to-face classrooms. More courses are currently under development.

MPS also has a digital initiative for elementary school students. Based on an overwhelming response to the MPS hour of code in December 2013, all students in K–5 began taking part in the district's new computer programming curriculum in fall 2014. The program includes four online, self-paced applications designed to get young students interested in computers. All elementary teachers received a day of professional development in summer 2014 on teaching programming.

DIGITAL LEARNING CONTENT AND TOOLS

There are a variety of applications that are used in different content areas, but no digital content was purchased. Teachers are loading their own resources, work, and assessments into the district's LMS. Prior to the tablets, most teachers were using the LMS as a class content repository by uploading syllabi and resources for students. With the tablet implementation, teachers are using the LMS to create interactive learning activities for students. Tonka Online courses are developed and taught by MPS teachers; no content has been purchased.

TEACHING AND STAFFING

The tablet implementation team, led by the assistant superintendent for instruction, includes the director of technology and media services, technology integration specialists (TIS), building principals, media specialists, teachers, and communications staff. The team sets monthly goals starting with classroom management routines in September, formative assessment in October, and a new educational instructional strategy each month beginning in November.

MPS has 4.5 TISs: 1 at the elementary school level, 1½ at the middle schools, and 2 at the high school. This equates to 1 TIS for every 1,500 devices. The TISs focus on the instructional side of technology and work with building principals and teachers to improve teaching and learning. Media specialists are trained to be the first line of tech support in each building and can help with repairing or replacing tablets. The director of technology and media services oversees the technology integration and media specialists. The district has a technology department that handles all hardware and software issues that may arise.

MPS teachers receive tablets a full year before their students and participate in an extensive three-year professional development program. In the first-year they have a full training day in the spring before the fall launch of the tablets, a full day of training in August, two full days during the school year, two more half-days where they work directly with a teacher experienced with tablets, and ongoing support from TISs. In the second-year they have quarterly meetings to share and refine, two half-days of training, and ongoing support from TISs. In the third-year they have quarterly meetings to share and refine, and ongoing support from TISs. Teachers are routinely given release time to observe other classrooms throughout the year.

BUDGET AND FUNDING

Minnetonka voters have twice passed dedicated instructional technology funding that will last through 2017. In SY 2013–14, 26% (2,490 students) of the MPS student population was from outside the geographic boundaries of the district. MPS is a popular school of choice in the area and has earned $62 million dollars from out-of-district enrollment over the past seven years.

KEY DIGITAL LEARNING COMPONENTS

1:1 tablet program

Launched in 2011 with pilot group of 9th grade students

All grade 8–11 students had tablets in SY 2013–14 (2,900 students)

Adding 7th and 12th grade in SY 2014–15 (4,500 students)

Students in non 1:1 grade levels have access to tablets during the school day

Tonka Online

Offers fully online courses for high school students

Launched in summer 2014 with first course

Expanding to nine courses for SY 2014–15

K–5 computer programming

All K–5 students learn grade-level appropriate coding skills

Required curriculum for all students

Taught by district teachers

Programming courses are available online so students can work at their own pace

DISTRICT SNAPSHOT

New Albany-Plain Local Schools

New Albany, Ohio

Enrollment: 4,414 students

Total Number of Schools:

4
- 1 K-1 Elementary School
- 1 2-5 Elementary School
- 1 Middle School
- 1 High School

Free / Reduced-price Lunch: 8.1%

Graduation Rate: 98.1%

New Albany-Plain Local Schools (NAPLS) will offer 17 blended courses for high school students in SY 2014–15. Its digital learning initiative includes the following elements:

- Blended courses are designed to allow students to attend whole class instruction 1–2 days a week and complete the remaining coursework online.
- Nineteen staff members have completed a year-long professional development program to learn to create and teach blended courses.
- NAPLS is now partnering with other districts to share its professional development program.

In May 2012, NAPLS was one of six Ohio school districts to be awarded a $138,000 grant from the Ohio Board of Regents (formerly eTech Ohio) to implement a new model of blended learning. The grants were designed to encourage innovation in Ohio classrooms. Each awardee was required to focus its blended learning in one school building, and NAPLS implemented in the district's single high school.

The district launched its first 10 blended learning courses in January 2013. The initial courses were English 10, art, senior seminar, algebra II connections, music theory, government, politics & economics, AP physics, digital photography, and AP English 11. Due to low enrollment, several courses (English 10, algebra II connections, AP physics, and digital photography) were cancelled for the first year. The course offerings have now grown to 16 for SY 2014–15 and include new courses in honors English 10, college prep English, AP music theory, introduction to film art, accelerated physical science, AP physics II, and senior environmental science. Enrollment in blended courses has grown from 90 students in January 2013 to over 300 students in SY 2014–15.

The district designed a new instructional model that allows high school teachers to meet with students face-to-face less frequently than usual by using online content and instructional time to augment time in the physical classroom. It considers two types of learning environments: the physical classroom, and the online classroom (often referred to as the digital learning space). Teachers designate flex periods where students learn online in the digital learning space instead of the traditional face-to-face classroom. They design their own online content and instruction to complement and accelerate the learning that is occurring in the physical classroom. If the flex periods fall during the first or last period of the school day, students may come in late or leave the campus early. If the flex period falls during the middle of the school day, students work online in the media center or teacher's classroom. Students meet with their teacher in a traditional face-to-face class 1–2 times per week.

DIGITAL LEARNING CONTENT AND TOOLS

Teachers developed their blended learning courses in the school's learning management system (LMS) by integrating open educational resources with their own original content. Sixty-five percent of the spring 2014 blended students reported accessing their blended class in the LMS at least once per day; 92% of these same students reported that accessing course information in the LMS was easy.

NAPLS does not provide devices for students but instead encourages blended students to bring their own device (BYOD) to school. The district blended learning coordinator works with students who do not have access to a device outside of school to loan them what they need to succeed in their course. The high school has full wireless coverage and allows BYOD in all classrooms, at teacher discretion. Blended students also have access to district desktop computers in the media center on their flex days.

TEACHING AND STAFFING

NAPLS administrators believed that blended learning would be successful if the right teachers were selected to develop and teach the courses. The district allowed teachers to self-select and determine whether or not they were ready to teach using flexible time and digital content. In May 2012, 39 teachers attended an informational meeting about blended learning. NAPLS teachers were subsequently invited to complete an application to be selected; 16 teachers completed the application, which required them to explain why they wanted to transition to blended, decide which course(s) they were going to transition, identify what their target population was, and agree to the requirements of the blended learning program. During the application process, which lasted over the summer, teachers were given ample opportunity to opt out. Ten teachers completed the application process the first year and developed blended learning courses. The district still uses the same application process; four teachers were selected in summer 2013 and five in summer 2014.

All blended learning teachers are required to complete a full year of professional development. NAPLS developed its own professional development courses, which were designed and led by a staff member who is also an adjunct professor at a local university. Teachers earned graduate credit for successfully completing each semester of professional development. Teachers take the first course ("RISE: Introduction to Designing Online Courses") during the fall semester. The course is designed to assist teachers in creating a **r**eplicable, **i**nnovative, and **s**ustainable blended course that will **e**xtend learning opportunities for students. There are 11 modules in the 15-week course that walk participants through readings, activities, reflections, and collaboration as they learn and build their course simultaneously. The second semester professional development course is designed as a practicum and in many ways mirrors a student teaching experience. Teachers go through reflection activities with a mentor as they teach the blended course that they developed the previous semester.

In fall 2013, Gahanna-Jefferson Public Schools teachers joined NAPLS staff in the blended learning professional development course. NAPLS is opening up its course for other districts to join in January 2015.

CONCLUSION

The final course grades for the first set of students taking blended courses were statistically similar when compared to students taking the same face-to-face classes. However, these students reported that they preferred blended courses over courses using traditional instruction.

NAPLS implemented anonymous end-of-course surveys the past two years to capture student satisfaction with blended learning.

- Nearly 8 in 10 of the students said they would take another blended course.
- 80% of spring 2014 blended students reported that they were satisfied with their blended course, up from 73% a year earlier.
- 86% of these same students reported that they had the ability to work at their own pace in their blended courses, a statistic that has remained virtually the same since the first courses were offered.
- 88% of the spring 2014 students report that their blended courses were well organized in the LMS and this made learning easier, which is a 17% increase from spring 2013.

KEY DIGITAL LEARNING COMPONENTS

Blended learning courses

Launched in January 2013

Open to all high school courses

Currently offers 17 courses

Flexible time in blended courses

Blended courses have a physical classroom and an online classroom

Teachers design and develop online instruction to complement physical classroom

Students spend reduced time in physical classroom and have flexible online schedules

Outcomes

Blended courses showed statistically similar outcomes in course grades

80% of students like their blended courses; even more like time flexibility

DISTRICT SNAPSHOT

New Orleans Public Schools

New Orleans, Louisiana

Enrollment: 29,632 students

Total Number of Schools:

95

There are a mix of school configurations with some traditional elementary, middle, and high schools, and some more creative grade configurations such as K–1, K–2, K–3, K–4, PK–8, K–2 and 5–7, K–3 and 7–8, PK–12, and 9–10.

Free / Reduced-price Lunch: 91%

Graduation Rate: 67.7%

New Orleans Public Schools (NOPS) is unlike any other public school district in the country in that the large majority of students attend charter schools. The system is governed by a multitude of entities, including the Orleans Parish School Board (OPSB), which directly administers four schools and has granted charters to another 16, and the Recovery School District of Louisiana, which directly administers 15 schools and has granted charters to another 60. The RSD runs schools that, in most cases, it expects to transition to charter schools or other entities.

Personalized learning based on digital content and tools is increasingly being introduced into New Orleans schools as a range of independent charter schools and charter management organizations (CMOs) help to rebuild existing schools and open new schools. This is demonstrated by the following charter schools that have been in operation for several years:

- ReNEW Schools operates five charter schools in New Orleans that are using blended learning. ReNEW schools operate year round.
- FirstLine Schools operates five charter schools in New Orleans (two PK–8, two K–8, and one 9–12) that began using blended learning in SY 2011–12 with Arthur Ashe Academy and the 9th grade at Clark Prep High School.

RENEW SCHOOLS

ReNEW operates five charter schools in New Orleans: four PK–8 schools and one alternative high school. The alternative high school (Accelerate High School) was the first to pilot blended learning. Accelerate is geared toward students who have aged out of traditional high school and are credit deficient. The school operates on two shifts of four hours each day where students attend and learn online and with a traditional teacher. Each student has a desktop computer during the school day (a 1:1 ratio). Accelerate is piloting a small number of take-home devices with students who are showing the most progress. However, many of their students do not have reliable Internet access at home and must rely on libraries and local merchants with Wi-Fi to access online content. Accelerate tested devices with cellular 3G capabilities for students to take home but the connectivity was slow and unreliable.

In August 2013, a second ReNEW school, SciTech Academy, opened computer labs for students in grades 3–5 and 6–8, where they learn online for at least an hour each day. In November 2013, after seeing some initial anecdotal success with the computer labs and with the looming online national assessments, ReNEW purchased 1,200 mobile devices to expand blended learning while meeting the testing requirements. With this purchase, students in grades 5–8 at SciTech have 1:1 access to devices during the school day. Schaumberg Elementary, the next school to transition to blended learning, has a 2:1 student to device ratio in SY 2014–15.

Accelerate High School's 200 students access all digital content and instruction online, which occupies about 75% of each student's four-hour day. The remaining time is spent in small group instruction led by one of the school's 25 teachers. ReNEW's PK–8 schools use online digital content for mathematics and ELA. Lead teachers create introduction videos to all digital content. PK–8 schools use an assessment, diagnostic, and progress monitoring system that stores data for each student. Students take benchmark assessments quarterly, and bi-weekly mastery learning quizzes that are created by the directors of curriculum. Students complete common daily exit tickets that are developed by the lead grade and subject planners.

ReNEW's teaching and staffing plan consists of 400 teachers at the PreK–8 level and 25 teachers at Accelerate High School. Over three-fourths of the teaching staff came through an alternative path to teacher licensure such as Teach for America or Teach NOLA. The dean of blended learning at Accelerate dedicates half of his time to training teachers how to teach in small groups that leverage the power of online content. Working with ReNEW's teachers at all grade levels, he provides professional development workshops and works directly with teachers in small groups and individual conferences to help them master blended learning.

FIRSTLINE SCHOOLS

FirstLine operates five schools in New Orleans. In fall 2007 they opened Arthur Ashe Academy as a school without a focus on digital instruction, and then selected Ashe to be its first blended learning school, beginning its planning process in 2011. This decision was in part because the school has the highest percentage of special education students of any school in New Orleans (26%). They felt that special education students would experience the biggest benefit from blended learning because of its inherent personalized instruction capabilities. Students spend their eight-hour school day in dedicated blocks of time where they rotate between teacher-led classroom instruction in core subjects and a computer lab where they use adaptive digital content in math and English language arts. In SY 2012–13, Ashe saw a 17% growth in math on state assessments over the previous year.

Digital content and tools at Ashe are heavily concentrated in math and ELA. While two classes of students work at their own pace in the computer lab, students with tier III intervention needs use this time to work in smaller groups with their intervention specialist. Students with tier II intervention needs work with an instructor in the lab who provides them with support as they work through the digital content. Students in grades K–3 spend approximately 60 minutes in the lab, while students in grades 4–8 spend up to 100 minutes per day in the lab. Students must complete daily exit tickets before leaving the lab each day so their teachers know where they are when they attend the face-to-face class.

Face-to-face instruction is focused on small group rotations with limited whole class instruction. Teachers spend time at the end of each week analyzing student data to determine groupings and learning activities for the upcoming week. All Ashe teachers specialize in a single content area, even at the youngest grade levels. Ashe has two non-teacher lab coaches who supervise up to 60 students in the computer labs, monitoring their progress, helping them learn what programs to use, and providing instructional or technical support. Math and ELA courses each have two full-time teachers, one of which serves as the partner teacher to support students in tier II and III with even more personalized instruction.

Students at Ashe use digital content heavily in math and ELA. While two classes of students go to a computer lab, students with tier III intervention needs use this time to work in smaller groups with their intervention specialist. The students in the computer lab work at their own pace on a variety of math and ELA digital content. Students with tier II intervention needs work with an instructor in the lab who can immediately provide them with the support they need as they work through the digital content. Students in grades K–3 spend approximately 60 minutes in the lab, while students in grades 4–8 spend up to 100 minutes per day in the lab. Students must complete daily exit tickets before leaving the lab each day so that their teachers know where they are when they attend the face-to-face class.

LOOKING AHEAD

TMCF Collegiate Academy @ SUNO plans to open a blended learning school in SY 2015–16 with grades 6–8, expanding to 9–12 shortly thereafter. TMCF will be housed on the Lake Campus of Southern University at New Orleans in a very open setting that is integral to the academic day in which students will flow between small groups, face-to-face instruction, and digital content. Educate Now! and New Schools for New Orleans have partnered with Next Generation Learning Challenges to fund Breakthrough Schools: New Orleans, which plans to award up to $6 million through 2017 to support the integration of personalized learning in New Orleans charter schools. New Orleans is poised to see a variety of personalized learning initiatives in the coming years. Charter schools, which are competing for students, are beginning to employ models that rely heavily on digital learning to educate students and stay competitive.

KEY DIGITAL LEARNING COMPONENTS

Most students are in charter schools

A few of the charter schools and management organizations are using digital learning to personalize instruction

Other schools and organizations are moving towards digital learning

Foundations and advocacy organizations are supporting digital learning across the city

ReNEW Schools

Launched in 2010

5 schools

3,400 students PK–12

FirstLine Schools

Started in 1998 as Middle School Advocates

Change name to FirstLine in 2008

5 schools

2,400 students PK–12

DISTRICT SNAPSHOT

Oakland Unified School District

Oakland, California

Enrollment: 37,040 students

Total Number of Schools:

86

- 50 Elementary Schools
- 4 K-8 Schools
- 13 Middle Schools
- 3 6-12 Schools
- 7 High Schools
- 9 Alternative / Continuation Schools

Free / Reduced-price Lunch: 71.4%

Graduation Rate: 62.6%

Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) and a few charter public school partners began with one main digital learning initiative—working with a total of eight schools to build classrooms and entire schools based on personalized learning—that was augmented by a large-scale effort to add computers and Internet infrastructure to district schools in preparation for the rollout of the online national assessments. The district is now leveraging both of these initiatives to offer digital content and a digital learning technology platform to schools across the district, starting with 20 schools in SY 2014–15. Funding and expertise from the Rogers Family Foundation and other outside sources support the personalized learning school redesign, and the technology infrastructure upgrades are being funded via California state funding to support Common Core.

The blended learning initiative is initially being implemented in two cohorts that include three elementary schools (including one charter school), four middle schools, and one charter school that covers grades K–8. The first cohort started in SY 2011–12 with two middle schools (James Madison Middle School and Elmhurst Community Prep), and two elementary schools (Korematsu Discovery Academy and EnCompass Academy). The second cohort started in SY 2013–14 and is made up of one elementary charter school (Aspire Triumph Technology Academy), two middle schools (Bret Harte Middle School and Edna Brewer Middle School) and a K–8 charter school (ASCEND Education for Change). The first cohort of pilot schools has a high number of economically disadvantaged students with 93% of students receiving free or reduced-price lunch, 22% higher than the district average. Sixty-one percent of the pilot students are English language learners and 95% are either Hispanic or African-American.

As of SY 2014–15 OUSD and the charter school partners are running blended learning in both cohorts, reaching almost 3,500 students. All blended learning is taking place using small flexible groups where students rotate among groupings and learning modalities. The groupings differ from school to school as each pilot school designed its own model.

The district is building on the existing pilot schools and technology infrastructure to add digital instruction across other district schools. Fifteen schools are using adaptive math digital content, and 20 schools are piloting a district-wide technology platform with additional digital content. In addition, the district makes Google Apps for Education available to all schools.

DIGITAL LEARNING CONTENT AND TOOLS

The redesigned schools have used more than a dozen digital content providers; the number varies as the schools test different providers. In the pilot schools, content and tools are selected at the school level with a few district contracts and minimal coordination. For example, at Aspire Triumph Technology Academy students spend about an hour each day on a combination of online adaptive content in math and reading. The school uses an online student information system; three sources of digital content (one each for adaptive math and reading, and a third that is both math and reading); a software system to manage logins across digital platforms; an online professional development platform; and software to assist with surveys and data analytics.

In November 2013, OUSD authorized $3.5 million in state-provided Common Core funds to purchase devices for students. The device decision, which was made at the district level, was driven solely by the need to administer the Smarter Balanced tests in April 2014. A total of 257 carts with 34 devices each (8,738 total devices) were distributed among all district schools in March 2014. The average student/device ratio across all buildings is 2:1 with the highest ratio being 2.8:1.

TEACHING AND STAFFING

During the initial year of the pilot, teachers routinely met with the Rogers Family Foundation director of blended learning for collaboration and development. Now with over 120 teachers involved, the director has personal contact with fewer teachers, and the original pilot teachers are serving as mentors to expand blended learning in their buildings and across the district.

In addition to extensive support and professional development for teachers and administrators in the pilot schools, the district gave stipends of $1,500 to at least one teacher in each building who was designated as the instructional technology teacher leader (ITTL). The 170 ITTLs work within their building to help teachers use devices in their daily instruction. The ITTLs also receive additional professional development and collaboration opportunities from OUSD throughout the year. Although online assessments drove the device purchase decision, the district is working to ensure that the devices are used to improve teaching and learning outcomes over the course of the entire academic year and not just on a few testing days.

BUDGET AND FUNDING

The Rogers Family Foundation and other funders have supported OUSD in this project. The foundation has provided funding, and its director of blended learning supports OUSD (among other responsibilities). The foundation has also provided assistance from other experienced professionals in blended learning. At the outset Rogers invested $1 million, which was allocated as follows:

- 30%: Infrastructure upgrades and about 500 computers (additional computers were paid for by other funding sources)
- 24%: New support positions and teacher professional development
- 20%: Outside partners to help design and implement blended learning
- 14%: Evaluation, communications, training, and program administration
- 12%: Digital content

The initial investment in blended learning was $971 per student, but because much of the cost was allocated to initial hardware purchases, the ongoing operational cost to expand within schools is much lower.

CONCLUSION

OUSD is building from a base of expertise provided by a mix of district schools and charter schools, and supported by the Rogers Family Foundation, other funders, and other sources of outside expertise. They are planning to build on the initial blended pilot schools in order to design, plan, and implement personalized learning in three to five schools and evaluate results by 2019. If those schools demonstrate "dramatically better results," the district will then spread the personalized blended learning implementations across all district schools by 2030.

Whether or not the district will see dramatically better results remains an open question. Initial outcomes data demonstrate improvements in some areas, but not across the board. For example, during SY 2013–14 reading achievement (as measured by the percentage of students reading on grade-level by the Scholastic Reading Inventory) increased by at least 10% in three of the four pilot schools. These schools remained behind the average of other schools in the district in reading proficiency, but their gain was often above the district average. Across the pilot schools, the results of the May 2013 California Standards Tests have been mixed, "with gains and dips across schools in both English Language Arts and Mathematics."

KEY DIGITAL LEARNING COMPONENTS

Personalized blended learning pilot

Launched in fall 2011

Serves students in 8 schools

Grades K–10

Reached 3,500 students in SY 2013–14

Common Core device initiative

March 2014

Purchased over 8,000 devices

Devices in all schools

Student to device ratio averages 2:1 across all buildings

Digital content and tools rollout to other schools

District allows local building control over most digital content

15 schools using adaptive math digital content

20 schools piloting technology platform with additional digital content

Google Apps for Education available to all schools

2 DIGITAL LEARNING POLICY

Introduction

The schools and programs described in the Digital Learning Activity section are not evenly distributed across the country. Policies that exist at the state level influence the extent to which digital learning is available to students.

THREE POLICIES IN PARTICULAR, TAKEN TOGETHER, ARE HIGHLY PREDICTIVE OF THE LEVEL OF DIGITAL LEARNING ACTIVITY IN A STATE. The three are student choice at the school level, the existence and strength of charter school laws, and student choice at the course level. States that have all three of these, or particularly strong policies in two of the three, tend to have the most digital learning opportunities for students. States that have none of these, or a single one that is not especially strong, tend to have the fewest digital learning opportunities.

Student choice at the school level

Because fully online schools are chosen by such a small percentage of students, in most cases these schools must draw from entire states in order to reach critical mass to be viable. Therefore most of these schools exist in states in which students are able to choose a school from outside their district of residence. In a few cases the laws that allow students to choose an out-of-district school are specific to online schools, but in most instances open enrollment laws apply to all students and all schools.

Existence and strength of charter school laws

Charter school laws are related to digital learning in two ways. As explored in the Charter Schools section, two types of charter schools are significant components of the digital learning landscape: those that are fully online, and those that are implementing creative instructional methods using digital content and tools. Although charter schools as a segment are far smaller than the rest of the public school sector, many of the most digitally innovative schools are charters.

Any ranking of strength of charter school laws is inherently subjective. Using the ranking developed by the Center for Education Reform,[45] a strong correlation is apparent between the strongest charter school laws (in AZ, IN, MI, MN, and Washington, DC) and the presence of digital learning in those states. The states that receive the lowest grades (AR, CT, IL, and MD) tend to have limited digital learning options. Exceptions certainly exist; for example NH and VA receive low grades but have large state virtual schools, which in the case of New Hampshire is a charter school.

Student choice at the course level

The final critical policy is student choice at the course level. As we discuss in this section, course choice is perhaps the single most important emerging issue related to online learning. Florida's experience—more than two million online courses have been successfully completed by students via the Florida Virtual School since it opened in the late 1990s—demonstrates that if students are freely given the option to take an online course, many hundreds of thousands will choose to do so.

Fully online schools

The first two of the above three critical policies, taken together, largely determine the states that have fully online schools operating across the entire state (or in the case of California, operating across contiguous counties). Thirty states have these types of schools, and across all states 316,320 students attended these schools in SY 2013–14, an annual increase of 6.2%. Many of the fully online schools are charter schools, and others are schools run by districts that attract students from other districts across the state. Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Arizona are the states with the most fully online schools and students in absolute numbers. No state has more than about 3% of their students attending fully online schools, and states with relatively high percentages of students in such schools (between 1.5% and 3%) but lower absolute numbers include Colorado, Nevada, and Idaho. Figure 2 on p. 55 shows the states with fully online schools and their statewide enrollments.

Other policy categories

The policies listed above are certainly not the only ones that impact digital learning; in fact many additional policies affect digital learning, particularly for students in non-charter public schools. These include:

- Funding mechanisms that determine school funding based on student seat time or require that students be in a classroom to generate funding can hinder innovative schools that are using digital learning to move towards mastery-based learning. Many states have some type of alternative to seat-time requirements, but often they are poorly defined, or cumbersome. For example, many schools in California that wish to generate funding for online students in the past have needed to use independent study mechanisms to generate funding, leading some blended schools to require that students attend the physical school during school hours—whether that is educationally appropriate or not.

[45] Center for Education Reform, Charter School Laws Across the States: Ranking & Scorecard; https://www.edreform.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/2014 CharterSchoolLawScorecardLink.pdf

Similarly, online schools in Colorado have been confused by the ways in which they can generate funding if they are using physical learning centers instead of being entirely online.

- Funding can also be used to create incentives to provide digital content and tools. Some states (e.g. North Carolina, Texas, Indiana) allow, and in North Carolina's case will require, that textbook funds be used for digital content.
- Some states impose regulatory requirements on online courses that are burdensome. For example, districts in Illinois can generate funding for online students who access courses from outside the school only if they create a "Remote Educational Plan" that is approved by the school board. The plan must be submitted to the state although it does not have to be approved.
- Several states (e.g. Alabama) have created innovation "zones" that create flexibility for schools to implement digital learning in ways that might otherwise be prohibited due to seat time or other regulations. Other states (e.g. Ohio and Maryland) go a step further and are providing innovation grants that support digital learning.
- The spread of computer-based state and national assessments has spurred investment in hardware and Internet access in many schools so that students will be able to take the exams online. An indirect result has been schools seeking to acquire digital content and technology platforms to put the computers to use for instruction as well as assessment.
- Student information privacy laws have the potential to hinder the use of digital learning, and are discussed in the Data Privacy analysis.

No single policy creates, and no state has, a perfectly conducive regulatory environment for digital learning, but each overall set of state policies is predictive of digital learning opportunities for students. States that have inter-district student choice at the school and course level, strong charter school laws, funding for online schools and courses that is at or near the overall state average, funding mechanisms that allow for easily implemented alternatives to seat time, and funding and/or policy incentives for digital learning, have the most digital learning activity. Even though some of these policies may be aimed at charter schools or state virtual schools, they often spur activity at the district level as well.

Developments in 2014

2014 has been a relatively quiet year in digital learning policy. Much of the activity has involved tweaking policy to continue in the same direction that a state has taken in previous years, for example creating the implementation policies for course choice programs (e.g., Michigan), or proceeding with implementing charter school regulations or allowing online charter schools to open (e.g., Maine and North Carolina). Unlike in most recent years, few states passed major laws that signal a significant change in direction and will have a substantial impact on digital learning. Notable policy developments include the following:

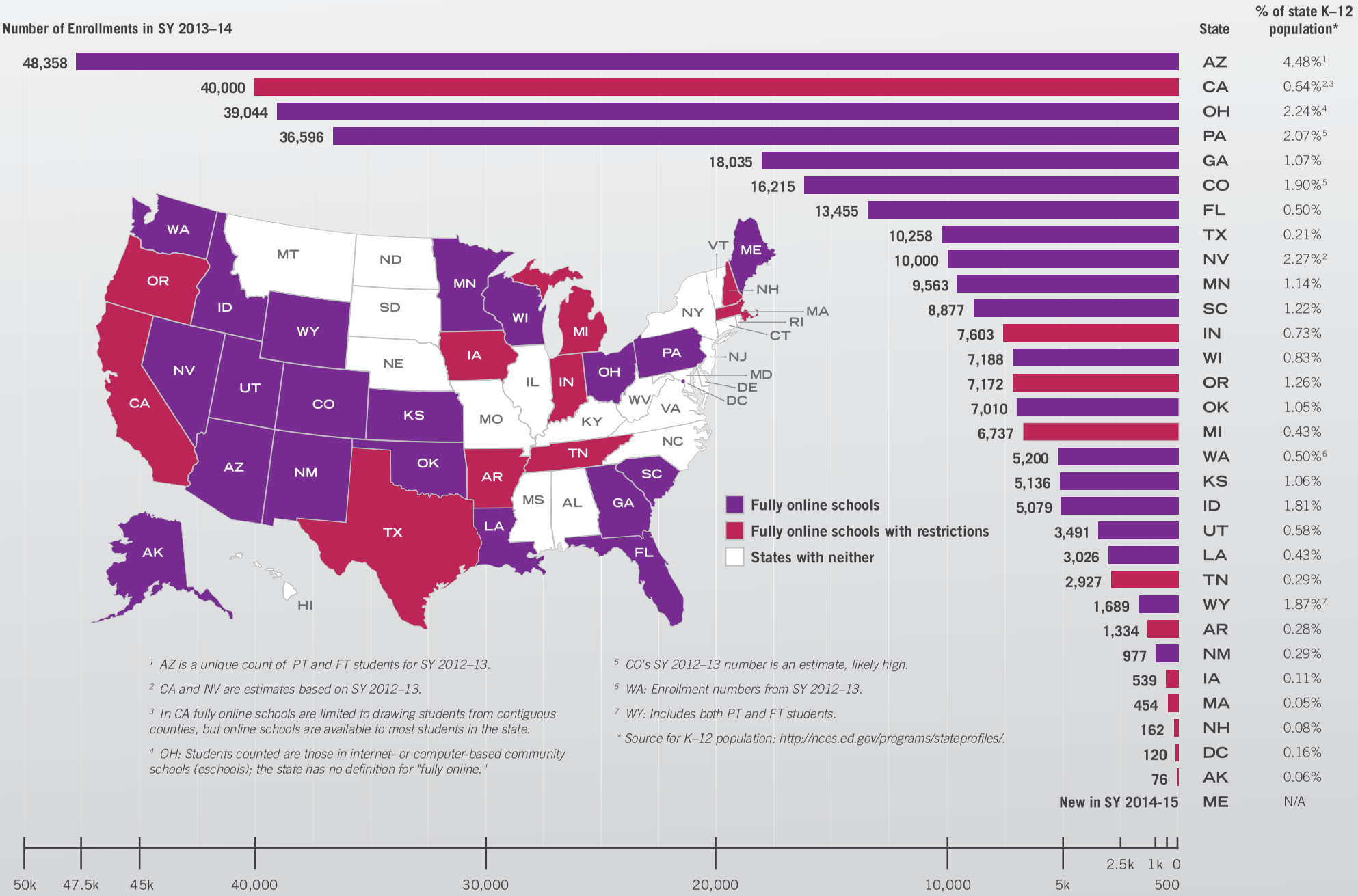
- California changed its independent study regulations, eliminating the requirement for teachers to sign and date all student work, and streamlining the independent study process, particularly for online courses. In addition, the bill also includes a provision that allows schools to identify the independent study hours associated with full courses as opposed to determining hours for each student in each independent study experience separately.[46]
- Colorado's state board of education approved a two-year pilot designed to allow Title 1 funds to follow students to online schools.[47] Hope Online Academy Elementary School was selected as the first pilot school for a variety of reasons, though primarily because it is a multi-district online school with multiple locations where students can receive meals and Title I services. Hope's authorizer, Douglas County

[46] California State Budget 2014–2015 Summary; http://www.ebudget.ca.gov/FullBudgetSummary.pdf
[47] Colorado State Board of Education June 11, 2014 meeting archive, part 5; http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeboard/sbe20140611. The pilot discussion begins around minute 30.

2014

States with Statewide Fully Online Schools

FIGURE 2: NUMBER OF STUDENT ENROLLMENTS BY STATE AND PERCENTAGE OF STATE'S K–12 POPULATION



[1] AZ is a unique count of PT and FT students for SY 2012–13.

[2] CA and NV are estimates based on SY 2012–13.

[3] In CA fully online schools are limited to drawing students from contiguous counties, but online schools are available to most students in the state.

[4] OH: Students counted are those in internet- or computer-based community schools (eschools); the state has no definition for "fully online."

[5] CO's SY 2012–13 number is an estimate, likely high.

[6] WA: Enrollment numbers from SY 2012–13.

[7] WY: Includes both PT and FT students.

* Source for K–12 population: http://nces.ed.gov/programs/stateprofiles/.

Schools, will receive an additional $547,072 in federal Title I money in SY 2014–15 (and likely a similar amount in 2015–16) to provide services for poor students. This is a shift from the previous funding method, which set a base funding amount for all multi-district online schools and did not allow for any additional categorical program funding.

- The New Jersey Supreme Court ruled that the state's current Charter School Act permits digital learning in charter schools after the New Jersey Education Association had filed a lawsuit claiming the Charter School Act does not permit the Commissioners to approve schools that offer digital learning. This ruling allows online public charter schools in the state, and allows the two blended charter schools to remain open.
- Ohio made $6 million available ($3 million in both FY 2014 and SY 2015) to provide grants on a competitive basis to public and chartered nonpublic schools for their participation in the state's Electronic Textbook Pilot Project. Additional funds for FY 2014 are used to assess the alignment of digital courses offered through the state distance learning clearinghouse (ilearnOhio) with state academic content standards.[48] In addition, Ohio's board of education will be approving new rules for blended schools in January 2015, clarifying the principles of competency-based education established in 2012. Blended schools will be exempted from seat-time requirements to the extent that a school alters the hours that it is "open for instruction in order to accommodate blended learning opportunities" for all students. Students may earn credits by demonstrating mastery of knowledge or skills, advancing among grade levels based on credits earned.[49]
- In Illinois, HB494 (2013)[50] had amended the Charter Schools Law of the School Code to establish a one-year moratorium on charter schools with "virtual-schooling components." HB393751 (2014) amended HB494 to extend the ban on fully online schools through December 31, 2016. The moratorium does not apply to charter schools with virtual-schooling components existing or approved prior to April 1, 2013.
- In Wisconsin, the department of public instruction developed policy to define and implement the Course Options program, formerly the part-time open enrollment program, which allows students enrolled in public school districts in grades K–12 to take two online courses at no cost to the student. The student must apply for the Course Options program through the resident district, but there are only a few reasons a district can deny a Course Options enrollment. DPI Course Options policy is based on Act 20 (2013).[52]
- Nevada effected significant legislative changes for SY 2013–14, removing numerous restrictions on the circumstances under which electronic instruction could be delivered, but did not address funding for part-time online courses. However, anticipated amendments to the Nevada Revised Statutes and Administrative Code (NAC388) for SY 2014–15 would address the apportionment of funds between school districts (and student record tracking), ensuring that any pupil may enroll full-time or part-time in a program of distance education provided by another school district or a charter school, at a charge of $250 per course to the resident district.
- The Alaska Department of Education and Early Development launched the Alaska Digital Teaching Initiative. The goal of the three-year project is to provide grants to districts to strengthen existing digital learning programs and expand them to serve students in smaller, rural districts. By improving access for rural students to rigorous high school courses, it supports the Alaska Performance Scholarship,

[48] Ohio Amended Substitute HB59; http://www.legislature.state.oh.us/BillText130/130_HB_59_EN_N.html
[49] Ohio Administrative Code Chapter 3301-35; http://education.ohio.gov/getattachment/State-Board/Committees/Operating-Standards-Committee/Rules-3301-35-09-Red-Green-Line.pdf.aspx
[50] Illinois HB494; http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/publicacts/98/PDF/098-0016.pdf
[51] Illinois HB3937; http://ilga.gov/legislation/fulltext.asp?GAID=12&SessionID=85&GA=98&DocTypeID=HB&DocNum=3937&LegID=77850&SpecSess=&Session=
[52] Wisconsin Act 20 (2013), Section 1810; https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/2013/related/acts/20

which is awarded to Alaska students who go to college in Alaska. As of July 2014, eight applications have been submitted.

- Virtual Virginia (VVa) legislation was amended and reauthorized in 2014, permitting the department of education to contract with local school boards to make their online courses available to other school districts through VVa. Districts may charge resident districts a per-student or per-course fee, subject to board of education approval. The department may also charge application fees to districts and providers seeking to offer courses.[53]
- In 2011, North Carolina's SB8 revised charter school law, but did not specifically address the creation and operation of virtual charter schools. The 2014 Appropriations Bill SB744[54] revised policies and procedures established by the state board of education in 2013 and created a Virtual School Pilot Program. SB744 authorizes the piloting of two virtual charter schools (grades K–12) beginning with SY 2015–16, concluding with SY 2018–19. The schools are to be approved by the state board of education (SBE). Also, a new chief academic and digital learning officer[55] reporting directly to the state superintendent was appointed. The position is responsible for "digital teaching and learning, instructional improvement system, Home Base support and development, data management, and special projects."

Additional details about each of these developments can be found in the State Profiles section.

[53] Virginia HB1115; http://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?141+sum+HB1115
[54] North Carolina Appropriations Act, SB744 / SL 2014-100 (2014); http://www.ncleg.net/Sessions/2013/Bills/Senate/PDF/S744v9.pdf
[55] Department of Public Instruction press release; http://www.ncpublicschools.org/newsroom/news/2013-14/20140307-01. The NCDPI named Tracy Weeks, former Executive Director of NCVPS to the position of Chief Academic and Digital Learning Officer.

Course Choice

Course choice programs and policies, which allow students to choose one or more online courses[56] from a provider other than the student's district of enrollment and have their funding flow to the provider, are a critical emerging area of focus in digital learning.

Course choice fills a critical need for students who do not have access to a wide range of courses—or access to a specific course they are seeking—within their school. Many schools lack advanced courses in math and science, challenging electives, and world language courses. According the U.S. Department of Education, only 50% of high schools offer calculus, 63% offer physics, and 81% offer Algebra II. The situation is worse for minority students, as only 74% of high schools with "the highest percentage of black / Latino students enrollment offer Algebra II."[57]

Online courses can fill the gaps for these students who are attending schools without a wide range of available courses. In addition, some students prefer to take a course online in order to create flexibility in their schedules, perhaps to meet the time demands of a job, sport, or other extracurricular activity.

Supplemental online courses have filled this need, and in the early days of online learning more than two dozen states created state virtual schools to provide online courses to students in their states. In most cases, state virtual schools are funded based on state appropriations, often augmented by course fees that the state virtual school charges to the student or the student's enrolling school district.

Two problems exist with this funding approach that was used for state virtual schools:

- If the state virtual school is going to meet all student demand for online courses without charging fees, the state appropriation will become very large over time. In those cases state legislators have become concerned that they are funding students twice—because many students generate a full amount of funding from the state via their district of enrollment, and then in addition take an online course that the state is subsidizing—entirely or in part—via an appropriation to the state virtual school.
- If the state virtual school is going to meet demand by charging fees, it either falls to the district or the student to pay. If the district pays, then the district usually retains the choice of whether or not to allow the student to take the online course. If the student must pay, then the online course is no longer publicly funded.

Course choice policies and programs address these shortcomings by allowing students to choose an online course, and have some portion of their funding be used to pay the online course provider. The key elements of course choice are the following:

- The student chooses online courses from one or more providers.
- The student retains control over the choice. In much the same way that open enrollment laws allow students to choose schools other than those in their districts of residence, course choice allows students to choose a single academically appropriate course from outside their districts of enrollment.
- A significant portion of the student's public education funding flows to the provider of the online course.

Eleven states have some sort of course choice in place as of SY 2014–15, but the states vary in significant ways. Key characteristics of specific course choice policies and programs that vary by state include:

- Whether students choose courses through a statewide source such as a common online course catalog and registration system, or alternatively have to go through their district of enrollment.

[56] Some course choice programs, such as in Louisiana, are not limited to online courses. The focus of this section of *Keeping Pace*, however, is on online courses. For simplicity we are discussing course choice as referring to online courses even when some programs also include face-to-face and blended courses.

[57] U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights. Civil Rights Data Collection: Data Snapshot (College and Career Readiness). March 21, 2014. Retrieved July 29, 2014, from http://ocrdata.ed.gov/Downloads/CRDC-College-and-Career-Readiness-Snapshot.pdf

- The reasons that a district can deny a student's choice, ranging from situations where the district has many options for denying the student's choice, to those where few reasons for denial are permitted.
- The recourse that a student has if the district denies the online course, such as appealing to a state organization.
- Whether students can choose from a single provider or from multiple providers.
- The ways in which course providers are vetted by the state prior to offering courses.
- How the cost of the course is determined, and in particular whether the state sets a cost per course, or the cost is set by the provider (usually capped at the pro-rated amount of the student's funding).
- The funding process, including whether funding is completion-based.
- The tracking and reporting that the state does of providers, online course enrollments, and outcomes.

Course choice programs versus course choice policies

States that allow course choice fall into two categories: those that have state-level, state-supported course choice programs that actively encourage and assist students in selecting courses, and those that allow course choice as a policy, but don't have a formal state program to facilitate and/or expand course choice. For simplicity, we refer to these states as either having a course choice program OR a course choice policy, even though states with programs must also have some associated policy. States with a course choice program typically have state education agency staff—or a separate organization that may be outside the education agency—running aspects of the program, including informing students of course options, reviewing and approving providers, and tracking and reporting results. In addition, in most cases a funding mechanism specific to course choice, often including some percentage of completion-based funding, has been implemented.

This distinction is important, because it is likely that the states with course choice programs will see more growth in the number of students taking advantage of course choice than states that have policy in place, but no program. States with course choice programs are actively promoting these programs via some combination of course catalog websites, formal reporting of course choice providers and/or outcomes, and other measures. States with course choice policy allow students to enroll in single online courses, but aren't taking measures to promote or facilitate such enrollments.

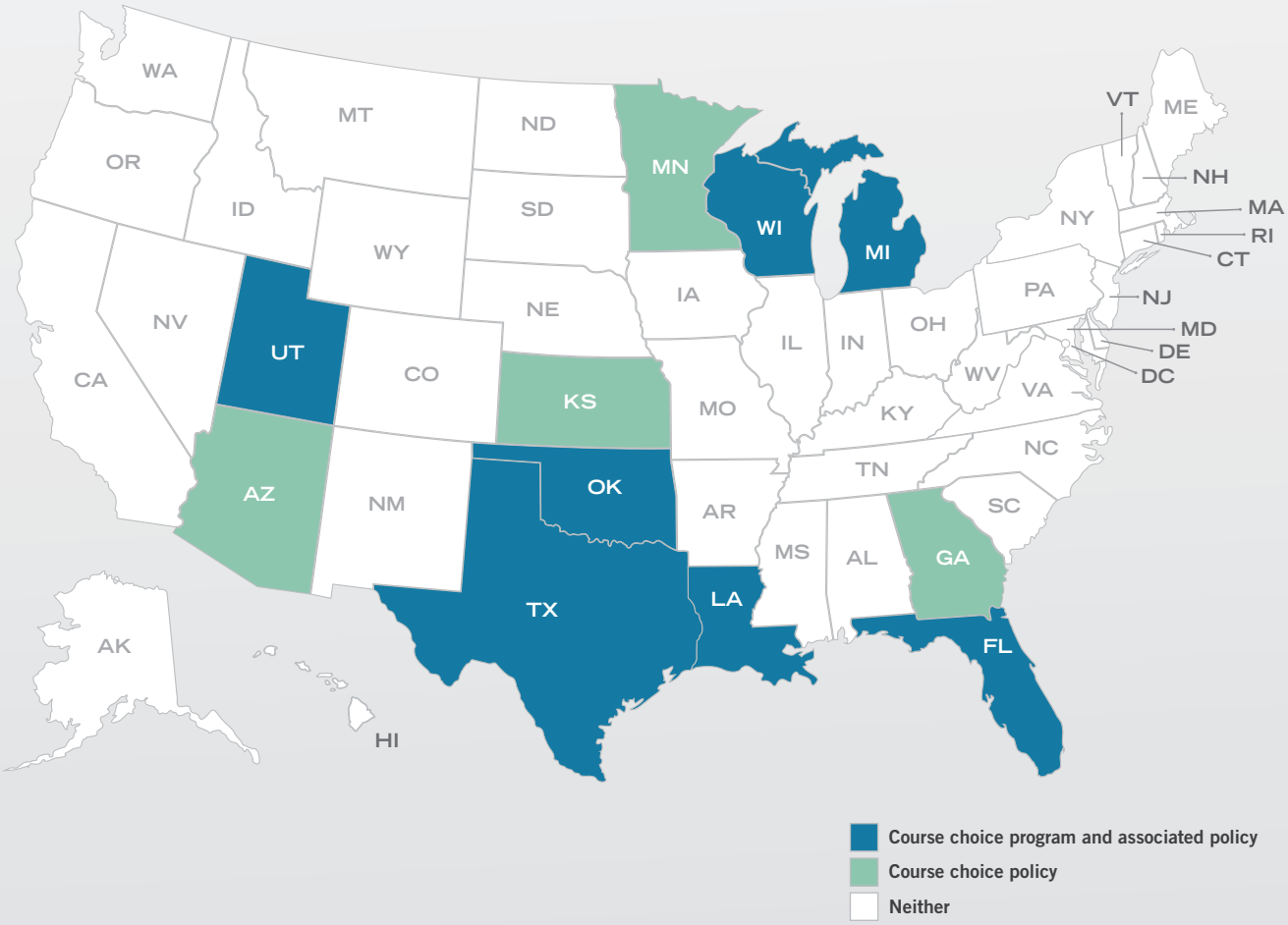
Table 7: Common attributes of course choice programs and course choice policies

	Course choice program	Course choice policy
State-run or state-funded website promoting course choice	Yes	No
State approval of providers specific to course choice	Usually	Sometimes, but less often than course choice program states
State reporting of number of course enrollments in course choice	Varies, although most states plan to be able to report enrollments if they are not doing so already	States may be able to report the number of part-time online students, but often can't report the number of course enrollments
Districts are required to inform students and families of choice options	Usually	No
Funding is partially based on successful completion	Usually	No
State sets funding level that may be different than a pro-rated amount of FTE	Yes	The funding level may be different than for students in physical classrooms, but is not usually specific to course choice

2014

Course Choice Programs and Policies

FIGURE 3: STATES WITH COURSE CHOICE PROGRAMS OR POLICIES ONLY



State	Programs	Policy only	First year course choice program / policy was in operation	Number of course enrollments SY 2013–14	Percent change from SY 2012–13	Grade levels
AZ		●	SY 2009–10	Data not available	Data not available	K–12
FL	●		2002 through FLVS, expanded in SY 2011–12	410,000	-4%	K–12
GA		●	SY 2012–13	Data not available	Data not available	9–12
KS		●	SY 2008–09	5,559 unique students	+355%	K–12
LA	●		SY 2013–14	2,479	-61%	9–12
MI	●		January 2014	Unknown as of August 2014, but believed to be very few.	–	6–12
MN		●	SY 2003–04	11,557	+16%	K–12
OK	●		SY 2012–13	6,336 unique students	+28%	K–12
TX	●		SY 2013–14	5,708	-50%	9–12
UT	●		SY 2011–12	3,208	+151% (The state virtual school, Electronic High School, is not an approved SOEP provider)	9–12
WI	●		Fall 2014 rollout; replacing part-time open enrollment	New in SY 2014–15	–	K–12

States with course choice programs

As shown in Table 7 and Figure 3, seven states have course choice programs.[58]

- **Florida:** Florida is unique in that all schools in the state must make at least one, and usually three, part-time and full-time online providers available to all K–12 students, and students' right to choose one or more courses from Florida Virtual School (FLVS) is in statute. In SY 2013–14 FLVS, FLVS district-run franchises, district programs, and consortia served slightly more than 410,000 supplemental course enrollments. Although this is by far the largest number of supplemental online enrollments in any state in the country, it is the first time in the state's history that the total dropped from one year to the next (by 4%). Students may choose courses through an online course catalog maintained by the department of education that includes a wide variety of providers.[59] In SY 2014–15, the catalog is expanding to include course performance and completion rates, and a way for students and parents to provide course feedback. Funding is based on completions; each provider receives a prorated portion of the student's FTE ($5,230 in SY 2014–15) based on the number of courses completed.
- **Utah:** The Statewide Online Education Program (SOEP) is among the first and best-known course choice programs in the country. The program is quite small (though growing), serving 3,208 course enrollments (or 6,416 quarter credits) in SY 2013–14, an increase of 151% from the previous year. During SY 2014–15 students in grades 9–12 may enroll in up to four credits online per year; students can advance based on competency. SOEP opened to private and homeschooled students in SY 2014–15, and as of August 2014 these made up 50% of student enrollments. The state maintains a list of 14 approved district and charter providers; any LEA—charter or district—can apply to be an online provider, or can contract with private providers.[60] Providers receive 50% of course fees after the withdrawal period, and 50% when the credit is earned on time; they may also receive a reduced final payment if the student eventually completes the course. There are different funding levels for core and elective courses ranging from $200–$350.
- **Louisiana:** Louisiana's current program, the Supplemental Course Academy (SCA), evolved from its state virtual school (the Louisiana Virtual School, which closed at the end of SY 2012–13) and then from the Course Choice program that served 2,479 course enrollments in SY 2013–14. Ongoing legal challenges to the program's original funding model were raised, and the Louisiana Supreme Court found in mid-2013 that the Course Choice funding model was unconstitutional; as an interim measure, the department of education reallocated about $2 million in alternative funding for the SY 2013–14 pilot. Funding is now through the Minimum Foundation Program, provided as an incremental funding stream of $26 per student in grades 7–12 (about $7.5 million in SY 2014–15), in addition to the regular public education funding formula. Providers receive 50% of course fees upon enrollment and 50% upon completion, or 40% upon eventual completion. Students select their own online, hybrid, and face-to-face course offerings from 44 authorized providers, including commercial vendors, Louisiana community colleges, and school districts.[61] All course registrations require local school counselor approval.
- **Michigan:** Students in grades 6–12 can take two funded online courses without resident district approval as of January 2014. Students choose from Michigan Virtual School (the state virtual school) or a statewide course catalog[62] that includes district and intermediate school district courses. The legislation outlines five reasons districts can deny student enrollment requests. Online providers set the price for an individual course, however, districts do not have to pay more than 1/12 of the district's foundation allowance per pupil funding for a semester-length course ($593), or 1/18 of the district's foundation allowance for a trimester course ($393 max). Providers receive 80% of course fees upon enrollment and 20% upon completion.

[58] For more details about these states and their course choice options for students, please see each state's profile.
[59] Florida's Online Course Catalog; http://app4.fldoe.org/coursecatalog/
[60] Utah Statewide Online Education Program; http://schools.utah.gov/edonline/Students-and-Parents/Courses.aspx
[61] Louisiana Supplemental Course Academy; http://www.louisianacoursechoice.net/
[62] Michigan's Online Course Catalog; https://micourses.org/

- **Oklahoma:** In June 2012, state board of education rule created the Oklahoma Supplemental Online Course Program (OSOCP) to establish a framework for school districts to offer supplemental online courses to students in grades K–12.[63] That rule allows students to take up to five hours of supplemental online instruction at no cost to the student; funding is prorated to the prior year's per pupil expenditure. Each school district is responsible for paying each course provider, "based upon continued course enrollment and subsequent course completion." The state maintains a list of approved providers. Courses must be "educationally appropriate," defined as any instruction that is not substantially a repeat of a course or portion of a course that the student has successfully completed, regardless of the grade of the student, and regardless of whether a course is similar to any currently offered in the school district.
- **Texas:** All course choice activity in the state is through the Texas Virtual School Network (TxVSN),[64] which acts as a statewide course catalog that includes districts, open-enrollment charter schools, private entities, and nonprofits. Students may take up to three year-long courses each year at no cost to the student. Districts and open-enrollment charter schools may deny a student's enrollment request if the district or school offers a substantially similar course, and they have discretion to select the course provider for the course a student requests. Funding is based on completion; pricing cannot be determined by the state, only by the districts and open-enrollment charter schools involved.
- **Wisconsin:** The Course Options program is being implemented as of SY 2014–15.[65] Students may take up to two courses at a time from providers that include charter schools, higher education institutions, and approved nonprofit organizations. Districts may reject enrollment requests if the course does not meet the student's academic plan or satisfy a high school graduation requirement. The resident district pays the cost of online course, or 1/7 of a full-time open enrollment amount, whichever is less. The full-time open enrollment amount for SY 2014–15 is about $948 for a one credit course or $474 for a one-half credit course. The course provider, referred to as the "Educational Institution," is prohibited from charging a pupil or resident district any additional fees.

One of the key differences between states with policies and programs is that states that are promoting course choice programs typically require local districts to notify all students and families of course choice options. In Utah, the issue of student notification became a concern when the first two years of course choice resulted in low enrollment numbers and growth, and state leaders were concerned that districts weren't informing students about their option to take online courses. This is also the case in Florida, where there has been concern that due to funding changes districts were discouraging students from taking FLVS courses because when students take any out-of-district course, it results in reduced funding for the local district. In order to figure out whether districts were informing families of their course choice options, the DOE surveyed districts regarding their choice options for students and whether or not they educate students and families about those options; it released a report in April 2014 finding that districts are making options available to students as required by law. However, it also found evidence that a small number of district policies or practices are restricting or hindering student choice.[66]

In Michigan, PA 196 includes a $50 per student incentive payment to districts if it meets at least seven different criteria, including offering "online courses or blended learning opportunities to all eligible pupils. In order to satisfy this requirement, a district must make all eligible pupils and their parents or guardians aware of these opportunities and must publish an online course syllabus … for each online course that the district offers."

[63] Oklahoma's Supplemental Online Course Program approved providers; http://ok.gov/sde/node/3544#List
[64] Texas Virtual School Network course catalog; https://www.mytxvsn.org/CourseCatalog.aspx
[65] Wisconsin Course Options program; http://courseoptions.dpi.wi.gov/
[66] Florida Department of Education, Student Choice and Access; retrieved August 6, 2014; http://www.redefinedonline.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Choice-Access-Report_-FINAL.pdf

States with course choice policies

In addition to the states listed above, four states have course choice policies in place. These states allow students to choose single online courses, but they do not have a program in place promoting course choice. In general these states have had course choice policies in place for several years, and the number of students choosing individual online courses are fairly low. In most cases, these states refer to students who choose an online course provider as part-time students of the provider.

- **Arizona:** From SY 2009–10, any public district or charter school may apply to become an Arizona Online Instruction (AOI) provider, able to serve any K–12 student in the state with part- or full-time online courses. There are 66 school districts and 21 charter schools authorized for SY 2014–15; AOI served 48,357 unique students in part- and full-time programs in SY 2012–13 (the most recent year for which data are available).[67] State requires receiving districts to accept credits earned at a charter or district, but allows the receiving district to determine how the credit will be assigned (whether the credit will count as elective or core credit). Students cannot exceed 1 FTE; funding is prorated for providers based on percentage of ADM. Online programs are funded at 85% of base funding for PT students. There is no performance-based or completion funding.
- **Georgia:** Students in grades 9–12 are allowed to take courses from Georgia Virtual School, the state virtual school. Students do not need approval of the student's home district, "regardless of whether the school in which the student is enrolled offers the same course." GAVS receives $250 per student per course, as well as a $1.5 million appropriation for SY 2013–14. There is no performance-based or completion funding.
- **Kansas:** From 2008, students in grades K–12 may choose part- and full-time options from state-approved providers, including virtual schools, charter schools, districts, and service centers; 93 providers are approved for SY 2014–15. Districts must make inter-district agreements for students to take supplemental online courses. In SY 2013–14, 5,559 students took supplemental online classes. Students are considered "enrolled" at the school where they take the most coursework—face-to-face or virtual; the part-time school considers the student enrolled for the remaining minutes (of 360) of that student's FTE.
- **Minnesota:** Minnesota was among the first states to allow students to choose a single online course from among multiple providers. As of June 2014, 27 approved online learning public school providers represent a mix of consortia, intermediate districts, charter school programs, and multidistrict programs serving students statewide; only approved providers generate funding. These programs served 11,557 supplemental course enrollments in SY 2013–14, a 16% annual increase.

In Nevada, amendments to state regulations for SY 2014–15 are anticipated to clarify part-time, out-of-district course pricing, laying the groundwork for a statewide Course Choice program,[68] but as of August 2014 these amendments had not yet been approved.

Three states (Colorado, Oregon, and New Mexico) are not included in the *Keeping Pace* count of course choice states even though they have policies that suggest course choice may be an option. In these states no course choice measures have been implemented, and few or no students are taking individual online courses that are funded via the public education funding formula.

[67] Arizona reporting identifies unique students who took at least one online course through AOI, and cannot distinguish between FT and PT students; the DOE believes the majority of these enrollments are FT. The enrollment number reported is therefore not analogous to the numbers in other states.
[68] Personal communication with Jeffrey V. Wales, Distance Education Program Professional, NDE, July 14, 2014

Online Learning Requirements

As of August 2014, five states require students to complete an online course to graduate (Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Michigan, and Virginia) and one more, North Carolina, is considering such a requirement (Table 8). In 2012 the North Carolina State Board of Education (SBE) directed the North Carolina Virtual Public School to conduct a pilot and create a plan for a requirement that all students "successfully complete a teacher-led online course before they graduate beginning with the class of 2020."[69] The results of the pilot have been presented to the SBE, and a decision on enacting an online graduation requirement is expected in 2014. Arkansas piloted its requirement with a handful of districts and charter schools in SY 2013–14; as of SY 2014–15 the pilot is complete and all public school district and charter school students graduating in 2018 are now required to take a "digital learning course," which could be an online or a blended course.

Table 8: States with online learning requirements

State	Requirement details	Year effective
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)."[70]	Graduating class of 2013
Arkansas	"Each high school student shall be required to take at least one (1) digital learning course for credit to graduate." The courses shall be of high quality, meet or exceed state standards, and be made available in a "blended learning, online-based, or other technology-based format tailored to meet the needs of each participating student."[71]	Graduating class of 2018
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."[72]	Students entering 9th grade in 2011
Michigan	To graduate from high school, students must meet either of the following requirements: "(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 …."[73]	Students entering 8th grade in 2006
Virginia	Beginning with the 9th grade class in 2013–14, the graduation requirements to earn a standard or advanced studies diploma include the "successful completion of one virtual course. The virtual course may be a noncredit-bearing course."[74]	Students entering 9th grade in 2013

Other states have passed legislation or rules that encourage, but do not require, taking an online or blended course in order to graduate. The Georgia legislature instructed the state board of education to establish rules to maximize the number of students who complete one online class prior to graduation, beginning with students entering 9th grade in SY 2014–15. 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." The Massachusetts High School Program of Studies, MassCore, recommends additional learning opportunities for high school students to study in order to arrive at college or the workplace well prepared, including taking an online course.

In addition, some schools and districts have created online learning requirements. These include Kiel High School (WI); Kenosha School District in Wisconsin (beginning with class of 2016); Lead-Deadwood (SD) High School (beginning with the class of 2014); and Marietta City Schools in Georgia (beginning with the class of 2016). Putnam County Schools in Tennessee requires an online Personal Finance Course for all graduates from SY 2013–14, and Sugar Salem High School (ID) requires one online class of all students, and guides students toward classes offered by the state virtual school, Idaho Digital Learning.

[69] North Carolina State Board of Education, December 2012 meeting notes; https://eboard.eboardsolutions.com/Meetings/ViewMeetingOrder.aspx?S=10399&MID=728

[70] Alabama State Code, 290-3-1-.02-(8)(d)4; http://www.alabamaadministrativecode.state.al.us/docs/ed/290-3-1.pdf

[71] Arkansas Act 1280 (2013); http://www.arkansased.org/public/userfiles/Legislative_Services/Quality%20Digital%20Learning%20Study/Facts/Act%201280%20Digital%20Learning%20Opportunities.pdf

[72] Florida CS/CS/HB7197 (2011); http://www.myfloridahouse.gov/Sections/Documents/loaddoc.aspx?FileName=_h7197er.docx&DocumentType=Bill&BillNumber=7197&Session=2011

[73] Michigan ESB1124 Sec. 1278a (1) (b) (i and ii); http://www.michigan.gov/documents/PA_123_and_124_159920_7.pdf

[74] Virginia Standard Diploma graduation requirements; http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/graduation/standard.shtml

MOOCs

Massive open online courses (MOOCs)—primarily video-based courses aimed at very large student audiences—have received extensive attention in the media in recent years, as the largest of the courses offered through MOOC providers including Udacity and Coursera have attracted tens of thousands of students. Some postsecondary institutions have partnered with MOOC providers to offer remedial or credit-bearing courses, creating additional awareness of the potential—and the current drawbacks—of MOOCs.

The media coverage, and occasional references to K–12 education within it, sometimes obscures the fact that through SY 2013–14, MOOCs have not had a discernable impact on K–12 education. Within K–12 education, in fact, it is not clear that MOOCs are being or should be considered a category separate from online learning from a policy or practice perspective. There are, however, very key differences between the two, including the role of teachers and the level of student interaction and data integration.

Florida is among the very few states formally examining whether MOOCs should be among the educational options available to K–12 students. HB7029 (2013) required the Florida Department of Education (DOE) to develop the Florida Approved Courses and Tests (FACT) initiative by SY 2015–16, to expand student choice and online course options, explicitly including MOOCs. In addition, the law required the creation by the DOE of a new approval process for MOOC providers (and other online course providers). This approval process was submitted to the legislature in February 2014.[75]

When the legislation was passed in 2013, some Florida schools responded by formally offering MOOCs to their students. Students in Pinellas County (FL) are taking advantage of a series of three MOOCs offered by St. Petersburg College to help high school students prepare for college-level courses.[76] As of November 2013, 1,100 students had enrolled in the first class, a math MOOC, and 130 had completed it.[77] Broward College offers a similar course to students that combines reading, writing, and mathematics into one course to prepare students for college;[78] it had 3,200 worldwide students enrolled as of May 2014.[79]

Ohio is the other state that has a formal role related to MOOCs, via ilearnOhio, an e-learning platform funded by the Ohio General Assembly that includes a searchable repository of online content. All courses are subject to an application and review process;[80] there are 25 approved providers as of August 2014. Through ilearnOhio, Ohio was the first state to guide K–12 students to MOOCs. Ten MOOCs are offered for students in grades 9–12. Course descriptions state that "There is no academic credit for taking any [MOOC], but completing a [MOOC] may qualify a student for Flex Credit."[81]

In addition to these activities at the state level, MOOCs are being offered in other states as well. The University of Houston (UH) System launched two MOOCs designed to help high school students prepare for the College Board's Advanced Placement (AP) Calculus and Statistics exams. The courses, "Preparing for the AP Calculus AB Exam" and "Preparing for the AP Statistics Exam," are offered through Coursera; over 3,000 students had enrolled before the courses began in March 2014.[82] Amplify Education, Inc. is offering a MOOC in AP computer science that is intended to combine online content with onsite support provided by the student's school.[83] Other providers including Michigan Virtual University have offered MOOCs primarily for educators, and some K–12 students have taken part.[84]

[75] The February 2014 FACT Report is available from the FLDOE. If published by the legislature, it will be made available on the *Keeping Pace* website.

[76] St. Petersburg College free online college preparation courses; http://www.spcollege.edu/ready/#tab=1

[77] Minutes of the November 19, 2013 Meeting of the Board of Trustees of St. Petersburg College; https://www.google.com/url?q=https://www.spcollege.edu/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx%3Fid%3D12799&sa=U&ei=Y0n2U9_4EMyYyASG3IFo&ved=0CBEQFjAJOAo&client=internal-uds-cse&usg=AFQjCNH62QJj2vKEMQocTymXidMYSH4-bg

[78] Broward College free college readiness course; http://www.broward.edu/academics/online/Pages/Free-College-Readiness-MOOC.aspx

[79] The Heartland Institute, *Massive Online Courses Expand into K–12*; http://news.heartland.org/newspaper-article/2014/06/05/massive-online-classes-expand-k-12

[80] Ohio Provider Guidelines; http://www.ilearnohio.org/pdf/CourseProviderGuidelines.pdf

[81] In Ohio, flex credits offer students a way to earn course credit toward high school diplomas in ways not limited solely to "seat time." See Accelerating and Empowering Student Learning; http://education.ohio.gov/getattachment/State-Board/State-Board-Reports-and-Policies/Ohio-s-Credit-Flexibiilty-Plan/FINAL-CreditFLEX-8-4-ExSummarySPREADS.pdf.aspx

[82] University of Houston Daily Cougar, *First Massive Open Online Courses Launch*, February 20, 2014; http://issuu.com/thedailycougar/docs/79.078-022014

[83] Amplify MOOC; https://users-mooc.amplify.com/

[84] Ferdig, R. E., Pytash, K. E., Merchant, W., & Nigh, J. (2014). Findings and reflections from the K–12 teaching in the 21st century MOOC. Lansing, MI: Michigan Virtual Learning Research Institute. Retrieved from http://media.mivu.org/institute/pdf/Mooc_Findings.pdf

Data Privacy

Student data privacy has become a major policy and political issue in recent months. As of August 2014, 20 states had enacted a total of 28 bills related to data privacy this year, after enacting just one in 2013.[85] Although the majority of these bills do not explicitly prohibit the use of student data for instructional purposes, several have provisions that are challenging for educators and particularly for the use of digital learning. These restrictions, and concerns stemming from them, are discussed below.

Privacy of student data is a concern to educators because of potential restrictions in data usage and sharing that would impact the way that teachers, schools, and providers of digital content and platform solutions are using instructional information. Few people argue against the need to maintain privacy of student data, but some of the positions taken by privacy advocates, and some of the bills being proposed and passed, have the potential to significantly hinder the use of data in instruction. In some cases this appears to be an inadvertent result of well-intentioned bill sponsors. Privacy advocates have legitimate concerns that can be addressed through appropriate policies while maintaining the needs of educators to increase their use of data in instruction, and in most cases the new laws are striking an appropriate balance. As discussed below, however, a few states have passed laws that are cause for concern.

Background on student information, personally identifiable information, and the use of data in instruction

School records typically include student data elements that are collectively referred to as personally identifiable information (PII). PII may include the student's name, names of parents or other family members, the student's address, identifiers such as Social Security number, biometric information,[86] student number assigned by the school or state, and date / place of birth.[87] PII is also considered to include multiple data elements that alone would not identify the student, but when combined would yield PII.

In addition to PII, teachers and schools collect student academic information in a variety of ways and for numerous reasons. These range from fairly general information about the student (e.g., attendance, withdrawal, whether the student has an IEP or is an English language learner), to highly specific information about academic performance (test results ranging from state assessments to classroom quizzes, course grades, and similar).[88]

The federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) governs student data privacy at the federal level.[89] (A second and related statute, the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA), concerns student rights associated with federally funded studies.)[90] In addition to requiring that parents have the right to review and correct student records, FERPA sets limitations on how schools are allowed to disclose student information without permission from parents,[91] and creates some exceptions to those limitations. The state laws being considered or passed mostly strengthen FERPA regulations by further limiting the ways in which student information may be disclosed. To the extent that the state laws address online educational services,

[85] Background information on state laws related to data privacy, including a summary of privacy-related bills, was provided by the Data Quality Campaign. See http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/action-issues/privacy-security-confidentiality/.

[86] Biometric information is defined by the U.S. Department of Education as "measurable biological or behavioral characteristics that can be used for automated recognition of an individual. Examples include fingerprints, retina and iris patterns, voiceprints, DNA sequence, facial characteristics, and handwriting." http://ptac.ed.gov/glossary/biometric-record

[87] U.S. Department of Education. National Center for Education Statistics. *Technical Brief: Guidance for Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems* (SLDS), November 2010, Brief 2, National Center for Education Statistics 2011-602; http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2011/2011602.pdf

[88] U.S. Department of Education. National Center for Education Statistics. *Basic Data Elements: For Elementary and Secondary Education Information Systems*, NCES 97-531, by the National Forum on Education Statistics. Washington, DC: 1997; http://nces.ed.gov/pubs97/97531.pdf

[89] See http://nces.ed.gov/forum/ferpa_links.asp

[90] U.S. Department of Education; http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ppra/index.html

[91] FERPA regulations largely pertain to the rights of parents to control aspects of student data; these rights transfer to the student when he reaches age 18 or attends a postsecondary institution. See http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html.

they are filling a gap in FERPA—which is silent or unclear on several uses of student data in technology applications, although the U.S. Department of Education has issued guidance on FERPA related to digital learning. (This topic is discussed further below in "Federal Law and Guidance.")

Among the benefits of digital learning is the increase in the amount, value, and use of student data. Interactive digital learning can track student activity, including paths taken through instructional materials and time spent on specific instructional elements. In addition, because digital learning platforms can provide and track results of assessments, quizzes and tests may be given far more often than in non-digital learning environments, where grading of assessments requires extensive time from teachers or aides. A stream of real-time data can be used by teachers to manage and personalize instruction for each student, or to focus on certain topics for small group instruction or class as a whole. Schools, districts, and states also use the data generated by students in a variety of ways linked to instruction. With the shift in software (in all fields, not just education) to being "in the cloud," student data is often housed by vendors who provide digital content and platform tools. Prior to the current ubiquity of today's cloud-based education software, student data was most often stored within the confines of a school or district on local servers under local control, whereas today it is more likely to be stored on cloud-based servers owned by software vendors or online education providers.

Because of the reliance that digital content and platforms—and the schools that depend on them—have on the use of student data, the restrictions being considered and in some cases passed are of concern to educators.

State laws related to data privacy in 2014

State legislatures in 2014 considered more than 100 bills related to student data privacy, and as of August 2014, 20 states have passed a total of 28 laws. Most of the states are in the East and Midwest, with only Wyoming, Idaho, and Colorado among western states passing such laws. Most of the laws passed reiterate or clarify ways in which data may be collected and used, delineate parental notification requirements, or set reasonable prohibitions that do not impact digital learning.

A few new laws contain provisions that are likely to restrict digital learning, including the following:

- Louisiana's HB1076[92] prohibits the sending of student PII to the state and requires districts to obtain written consent from parents for any exceptions other than reporting required by state or federal law. The law also sets detailed and cumbersome requirements for service providers' use of student data. Although in some cases these requirements can be addressed through contracts between providers and districts, creating a contract that addresses the requirements of the law and allows for flexibility in use of data is difficult.
- New York's AB8556 and SB6356[93] have extensive provisions regarding student privacy whose scope is as yet unclear, but that provide broad powers to a chief privacy officer, and contain privacy stipulations for providers that are similar to those in Louisiana.
- Some new laws, such as in Idaho,[94] require that state boards of education or other rulemaking bodies consider and implement rules related to student data privacy. Although required rulemaking subsequent to the passage of a new law is not unusual, we have concerns about how this will play out in late 2014 and 2015 that we discuss further below (see "The next Common Core debate").

[92] Louisiana HB1076 (2014); http://www.legis.la.gov/legis/ViewDocument.aspx?d=911995
[93] New York S6536-D (2014); http://public.leginfo.state.ny.us/menugetf.cgi?SESSYR=2014&QUERYDATA=S6356D
[94] Idaho SB1372 (2014); http://www.legislature.idaho.gov/legislation/2014/S1372.pdf

- Several laws, such as in Florida (SB188 and HB195)[95] and New Hampshire (HB12),[96] are quite restrictive regarding biometric data. Unless the definition of biometric data is subsequently interpreted very widely, these laws are not likely to have an impact. If their provisions were expanded beyond biometric data the stipulations would likely hinder digital learning.

Federal law and guidance

In addition to state activity and the existing federal laws, there has been activity related to student data privacy at the national level as well in the form of guidance from the U.S. Department of Education, and proposed changes to FERPA.

The department has created a website, the Privacy Technical Assistance Center (PTAC), as a resource for information on "data privacy, confidentiality, and security practices related to student-level longitudinal data systems and other uses of student data."[97] A document on the site, *Transparency Best Practices for Schools and Districts*, for example, helps educators understand the intricacies of managing data and student / parental rights.[98] The department has also released guidance related specifically to digital learning: *Protecting Student Privacy While Using Online Educational Services: Requirements and Best Practices*.

The department is clear that there is no simple answer to questions about the application of FERPA to online education services: "Because of the diversity and variety of online educational services, there is no universal answer to" the question of how FERPA applies. One particular interpretation of the law, however, is critical for digital learning providers: "Under the school official exception, schools and districts may disclose PII from students' education records to a provider as long as the provider:

- Performs an institutional service or function for which the school or district would otherwise use its own employees;
- Has been determined to meet the criteria set forth in in the school's or district's annual notification of FERPA rights for being a school official with a legitimate educational interest in the education records;
- Is under the direct control of the school or district with regard to the use and maintenance of education records; and
- Uses education records only for authorized purposes and may not re-disclose PII from education records to other parties (unless the provider has specific authorization from the school or district to do so and it is otherwise permitted by FERPA)."[99]

This and some other interpretations of FERPA by the Department of Education have permitted access to student information by digital learning applications. The state laws discussed above would, in some cases, tighten these provisions.

In addition to federal guidance on the existing version of FERPA, a bill has been introduced that would amend FERPA to clarify and strengthen student data privacy.[100] It will likely go through many iterations and changes prior to being passed—if it is passed at all. The fact that it has been introduced, however, is another mark of interest in the topic.

[95] Florida SB188 (2014); http://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2014/0188/BillText/c1/HTML
[96] New Hampshire HB312 (2014); http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/legislation/2014/HB0312.html
[97] Privacy Technical Assistance Center; http://ptac.ed.gov/
[98] *Transparency Best Practices for Schools and Districts*; http://ptac.ed.gov/sites/default/files/LEA%20Transparency%20Best%20Practices%20final.pdf
[99] *Protecting Student Privacy While Using Online Educational Services: Requirements and Best Practices*; http://ptac.ed.gov/sites/default/files/Student%20Privacy%20and%20Online%20Educational%20Services%20%28February%202014%29.pdf
[100] *Markey To Introduce Legislation to Protect Student Privacy*; http://www.markey.senate.gov/news/press-releases/markey-to-introduce-legislation-to-protect-student-privacy

The next major political battle in education?

Some of the state laws passed in 2014 have provisions that are of concern, but many do not. Similarly, many of the provisions of the introduced federal legislation would not make significant changes to existing laws. Although further clarity in some areas would be welcome, at least two concerns exist for digital learning advocates.

The first is the possibility that in 2015 student data privacy may become the next political battle in education. The attention from state legislatures in 2014 suggests that it is an issue that may go further next year. In addition, the demise of inBloom—the foundation-funded, non-profit corporation that was working with several states to improve the use of student data—in response to political pressure suggests that the privacy issue is primed to become a major topic in 2015.[101] Although only a few of the data privacy laws that were enacted are restrictive in ways that hinder digital learning, many of the laws that were not passed—and early versions of some of the laws that did pass—were far more prohibitive. If student privacy becomes even more controversial in 2015, the bills that are enacted may be more problematic for digital learning than most of those enacted in 2014.

The second concern is that school districts may take a cue from state legislatures and privacy advocates and adopt policies that would restrict the use of data. Because digital learning remains a small part of most school districts, a foreseeable outcome is that digital learning efforts—online courses, digital content, and the use of technology platforms—are not fully taken into account when a school board formulates a student privacy policy.

[101] In addition, an advocacy organization has formed with the involvement of some of the people who were involved in fighting InBloom. See http://www.studentprivacymatters.org/.

Accessibility

Accessibility of digital learning for students with disabilities is not a new issue, but it is gaining attention from observers who are concerned that a substantial portion of the digital content and tools available to K–12 students and schools today does not meet legal requirements to provide equal access for all students.

Three federal laws govern accessibility in digital education. Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act was the original legislation passed in 1973 to protect the rights of individuals with disabilities in programs and activities that receive federal financial assistance, including funds from the U.S. Department of Education. The Office of Civil Rights within the department of education enforces Section 504. The original legislation has been amended and added to multiple times,[102] including with Section 508—the 1998 amendment to the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973— which addresses electronic and information technology accessibility for people with disabilities generally, with implications for technologies being used in education. This was the first time that accessibility standards were included with the legislation, including some standards that are now considered standard in basic web design: offering text-only versions of content and providing alternative text.

Additionally, the 2004 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) governs how states and public agencies provide early intervention, special education, and related services to children with disabilities. It addresses the educational needs of children with disabilities from age 3 to age 18 or 21 in cases that involve 14 specified categories of disability.

In parallel, the Web Accessibility Initiative worked internationally to develop the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0, which have become the standard for web design, and provide additional guidance for online course developers. WCAG is a comprehensive set of specifications that provide a higher level of accessibility than the standards included with the original 508 legislation.

The overall ramification of these laws is that instruction that is provided online must meet the needs of students with disabilities, allowing them to receive the same information and engage in the same interactions as students without disabilities. The consequences are more direct for online courses than for classroom-based skills software, because the online course typically has to provide an online accommodation, while the accommodation for the content used in a classroom may be a method of non-digital instruction.

Some evidence suggests that online courses and schools have not been consistently adhering to the requirements put forth by the department of education. Quality Matters and the California Learning Resource Network, two organizations that review online courses, report that the main reason that courses do not meet standards is that they do not address accessibility issues.

The Center on Online Learning and Students with Disabilities reported in 2012 what it called "significant concerns" about accessibility, including the following:

- "Inconsistent Policies: Ambiguity and variability exist in cross-state and cross-district funding, policies, and roles and responsibilities for providing special education and related services to students with disabilities in online environments.
- Accessibility and Universal Design: Preliminary inspection of widely adopted online environments reveals major gaps in basic accessibility for students with disabilities. Equally concerning is the general lack of instructional design and the specific lack of universal design for learning options. As some states have begun to include online learning as a graduation requirement, this poses a significant civil rights issue.

[102] For details on how the U.S. Department of Education protects students with disabilities, see https://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/miscellaneous/cb12-134.html.

- Teacher Training: Preparation for teaching online courses is often minimal even for regular education teachers. The special preparation in the unique competencies required to provide online instruction to students with disabilities is often totally absent."[103]

Many existing courses can address accessibility issues by understanding basic accessibility design principles that include:

- All digital images must have alternative text so that screen readers can describe the image to visually impaired students.
- Videos must be closed-captioned and/or include transcripts so that students with auditory listening or processing issues can get the information.
- Screens of long text should have an audio file of the text included at the bottom for students who need it.
- Course builders need to be aware of when to build information that can be accessed in the browser and when information needs to be downloaded. Text in a browser can easily be summarized, highlighted, and translated using free web tools. Not all of these tasks can be accomplished on text that has to be downloaded.
- English language learners need text that can easily be converted to a native language.
- Poor quality video and flashy animations should be minimized or eliminated for students with attention deficit issues.
- Tasks should be broken into manageable chunks. All longer activities should have progress indicator for students with anxiety issues.
- Scanned materials must have Optical Character Recognition-readable text.
- Course materials that need to be converted to Braille should be delivered in advance to students who are doing their own converting so that they have it converted and ready to use when needed.
- Students with extended time on exams needs to be grouped separately and discreetly so that they have the time allowed for exams.
- Information that is presented in lockdown browsers should be checked to ensure that they are accessible by assistive technology.

The above list is illustrative and not comprehensive. The Texas Virtual School Network has been a leader in identifying accessibility standards for K–12 digital content, and has published detailed accessibility guidelines and checklists that are used in its course review processes and available online.[104] In addition, iNACOL addresses accessibility in its National Standards for Quality Online Courses[105] (which was used by TxVSN in developing its standards), as has Quality Matters in its course review rubric.[106]

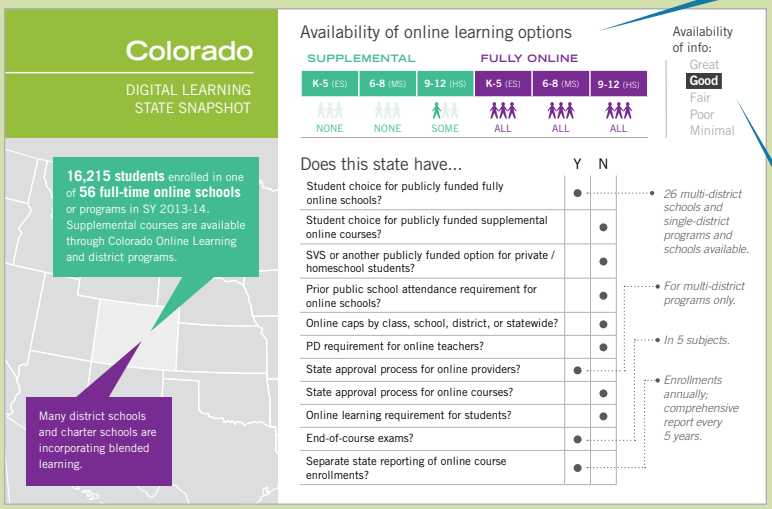
[103] http://centerononlinelearning.org/openletter/
[104] TxVSN Accessibility; http://www.txvsn.org/portal/Providers/Resources/Accessibility.aspx
[105] iNACOL Quality Standards; http://www.inacol.org/resources/publications/national-quality-standards/
[106] Quality Matters, Course Rubric; https://www.qualitymatters.org/grades-6-12-rubric

3 PROFILES

State Profiles

The state profiles that follow capture an overview of key digital learning activity and policies in each state. Major laws pertaining to digital learning are detailed, particularly those that passed in 2014. More extensive profiles with historical details for all states are available on the state pages of the* Keeping Pace *website at www.kpk12.com/states.

EACH PROFILE BEGINS WITH A STATE SNAPSHOT THAT PROVIDES A QUICK OVERVIEW OF THE DIGITAL LEARNING POLICY LANDSCAPE AND KEY PROGRAMS IN EACH STATE. The questions in the center table are the same for all 51 profiles, and are specific to digital learning. Additional details are usually included wherever a Yes answer is indicated. Two other sections warrant additional description:



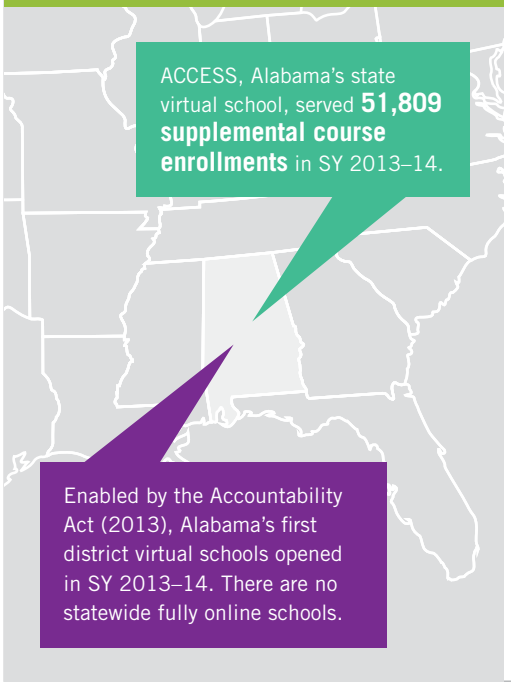
Availability of online learning options: These ratings are an assessment of the opportunities available to students across the state in SY 2013–14. These are the same ratings in Table 5; a full explanation of how the ratings were created is given on p. 31.

Availability of information: This is our assessment of the accessibility and quality of information relevant to digital learning within each state, as this varies considerably among states.

For more information about our research methodology, as well as commonly used definitions and acronyms, please refer to the Appendices at the end of this report.

Alabama

DIGITAL LEARNING STATE SNAPSHOT



Availability of online learning options

SUPPLEMENTAL			FULLY ONLINE		
K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)	K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)
NONE	SOME	MOST	NONE	NONE	SOME

Availability of info:
Great
Good
Fair
Poor
Minimal

Does this state have…

	Y	N
Student choice for publicly funded fully online schools?		●
Student choice for publicly funded supplemental online courses?		●
SVS or another publicly funded option for private / homeschool students?		●
Prior public school attendance requirement for online schools?		●
Online caps by class, school, district, or statewide?		●
PD requirement for online teachers?		●
State approval process for online providers?		●
State approval process for online courses?		●
Online learning requirement for students?	●	
End-of-course exams?	●	
Separate state reporting of online course enrollments?		●

For online learning requirement only, teachers must have received online-specific PD.

For online learning requirement courses.

1 online / technology-enhanced course or experience.

In 2 subjects.

Nearly all of the digital learning activity in Alabama is through the state virtual school, ACCESS (Alabama Connecting Classrooms, Educators, & Students Statewide) Distance Learning, though several district programs have been piloted in recent years, including the state's first fully online options. Alabama does not have a charter school law, though schools authorized under the 2013 Alabama Accountability Act (HB84)[107] may waive certain Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) rules, policies, and procedures. In 2008, Alabama became the second state to establish an online learning requirement.

ACCESS is a supplemental program that started in fall 2005; it served 51,809 course enrollments in SY 2013–14, roughly the same number as in SY 2012–13; it is one of the largest state virtual schools in the country. ACCESS offered 20 credit recovery courses in SY 2013–14, and as of SY 2014–15, it also offers 15 credit advancement courses to students who "exhibit proficiency beyond the level required" (as approved by the State Board of Education (SBE) as part of the 2008 First Choice initiative[108]). In SY 2013–14, 27,712 students in 132 school districts (out of 136 total) took ACCESS courses either from delivery school sites during set time periods, or off-site;[109] 4% of courses are offered by interactive video conferencing. As of SY 2013–14, private school students were permitted to take ACCESS courses on a fee basis. The ACCESS state appropriation for SY 2014–15 is $18.5 million, the same as for SY 2013–14; funds for hiring, teacher training, and course development are distributed directly to three support centers, which then receive an additional $250 per course enrollment.

[107] HB84 (Alabama Accountability Act, 2013); retrieved June 26, 2014; http://alisondb.legislature.state.al.us/acas/searchableinstruments/2013rs/bills/hb84.htm
[108] Personal communication with ACCESS Program Administrator, June 20, 2014; and Resolution To Adopt Alabama First Choice Implementation Guide; retrieved June 20, 2014; http://www.alsde.edu/sites/boe/_bdc/ALSDEBOE/BOE%20-%20Resolutions_4.aspx?ID=1476
[109] Alabama State Code, 290-3-1-.02(12); retrieved June 20, 2014; http://www.alabamaadministrativecode.state.al.us/docs/ed/290-3-1.pdf

All students in Alabama must complete "one on-line / technology-enhanced course or experience prior to graduation;" this could include an online course or a blended "online experience incorporated into courses used to fulfill requirements for graduation."[110] Exceptions through individualized education plans are allowed.[111] ALSDE has published guidelines on the essential characteristics of a quality online learning experience, specific course standards to meet the graduation requirement, and guidelines for online teachers.

State policies

The Alabama Accountability Act (2013)—formerly the School Flexibility Bill—permitted parents of students in designated "failing" public schools to receive an income tax credit toward the costs of transferring to a private or higher-performing public school. The act's Innovation Zone / Flexibility Initiative permits applications from schools seeking to waive ALSDE policies and procedures, enabling formation of assorted nontraditional schools (including virtual ones).[112] The act was found unconstitutional in May 2014 by a county circuit judge, who issued an injunction blocking implementation of the law. A stay has been granted on the injunction, permitting the act to operate during the appeal process.

HB165 (2012),[113] the Alabama Ahead Act, encouraged the use of digital textbooks and tablet or mobile computing devices for public 9th grade students and teachers. Beginning with SY 2012–13 in districts that chose to participate, "students in grades 9–12 shall be provided in electronic format … to the extent practicable and obtainable from the publisher, textbooks … and other instructional materials." It also stated "Where feasible, each [year] public 9th grade students and teachers will be provided in lieu of or in addition to hardbound textbooks and other instructional materials … a pen-enabled: tablet, mobile computer, or other similar wireless electronic device for storing, reading, accessing, exploring, and interacting with digital textbooks." The legislation allowed issuance of up to $100 million in bonds to pay for the program,[114] and tasked the ALSDE with developing an implementation plan and providing oversight. Additional legislation proposed in both 2013 and 2014 regarding funding and other changes to the initial law did not pass, and as of July 2014 no implementation plan was in place.

Digital programs

Enabled by the Alabama Accountability Act (2013), Alabama's first virtual high school programs, the Baldwin County Digital Renaissance High School and the Florence City Virtual School, opened as pilots in SY 2013–14. Both schools had caps on student participation, at 30 and 100 respectively. The Digital Renaissance Virtual School received permission to operate as a full-time stand-alone high school in SY 2014–15 with no enrollment cap. Students must appear in person for orientation, proctored examinations, state-mandated assessments, and physical education, and are expected to report to the learning center several times a week. Pike County Virtual High School and Mobile County Public School System Envision Virtual School were approved to open in SY 2014–15; respective enrollment caps are set at 100 and 250 students. Schools may use, but are not limited to, ACCESS course materials.

A separate blended ACCESS franchise model allows teachers in approved traditional high schools to use ACCESS content in their courses; the SDE provides training. Five districts used the ACCESS franchise model in SY 2013–14, and it is an option for all Alabama districts upon request. The model was piloted in summer 2011 by two teachers in the Spain Park and Hoover High Schools (Hoover District), and uptake in districts has been steady, including Dotham, Blunt, Huntsville, Montgomery, and Lauderdale.

[110] High School Distance Learning: Online/Technology Enhanced Course or Experience Guidance; retrieved June 20, 2014; https://docs.alsde.edu/documents/61/OnlineGuidance.pdf
[111] Alabama State Code, 290-3-1-.02-(8)(d)4; retrieved June 20, 2014; http://www.alabamaadministrativecode.state.al.us/docs/ed/290-3-1.pdf
[112] Approved Innovation/ Flexibility Plans; retrieved June 27, 2014; https://www.alsde.edu/Pages/Innovation-ApprovedPlans.aspx
[113] HB165 (2012); retrieved June 20, 2014; http://alisondb.legislature.state.al.us/acas/SearchableInstruments/2012RS/PrintFiles/HB165-enr.pdf
[114] 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.

Alaska

DIGITAL LEARNING STATE SNAPSHOT

Alaska Virtual Academy served **76 fully online students** statewide in SY 2013–14; Fairbanks B.E.S.T. served **290 in-district students** in SY 2013–14.

Alaska's Learning Network launched in 2011, but received funding from the state legislature for the first time in SY 2013–14. It served **608 enrollments** in SY 2013–14.

Availability of online learning options

SUPPLEMENTAL			FULLY ONLINE		
K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)	K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)
NONE	SOME	SOME	SOME	SOME	SOME

Availability of info:
Great
Good
Fair
Poor
Minimal

Does this state have…

	Y	N
Student choice for publicly funded fully online schools?	●	
Student choice for publicly funded supplemental online courses?		●
SVS or another publicly funded option for private / homeschool students?	●	
Prior public school attendance requirement for online schools?		●
Online caps by class, school, district, or statewide?	●	
PD requirement for online teachers?		
State approval process for online providers?		●
State approval process for online courses?		●
Online learning requirement for students?		●
End-of-course exams?		●
Separate state reporting of online course enrollments?		●

One statewide fully online school.

AKLN may cap number of students per course.

Alaska has offered a variety of distance learning options to its students for many years. There is a small state virtual school, one statewide online school, and there are correspondence programs using some online resources. The 2011 launch of Alaska's Learning Network (AKLN) sought to expand course options for all Alaska students by bringing together many of the distance programs scattered around the state.

AKLN was established with $1.2 million of Enhancing Education Through Technology (E2T2) funds in late 2010. Its primary goals are to provide:

- Distance courses taught and supported by Alaska-certified teachers.
- Professional development coaching for teachers and administrators, both on-site and remotely.
- Curricular resources for Alaskan educators (the Alaska Digital Sandbox).[115]

The work included the creation of nine courses aligned to Alaska Content Standards and the Alaska Grade Level Expectations; in addition, three new courses are being created for SY 2014–15. In SY 2013–14, AKLN offered 52 courses overall; courses that specifically meet requirements for the Alaska Performance Scholarship are targeted for inclusion in AKLN (to help pay for college or training after high school).[116] In SY 2013–14, AKLN served 608 course enrollments from students in 42 out of 53 Alaska districts, an increase of 82% from SY 2012–13. In SY 2013–14, AKLN offered a summer school program with 68

[115] About Alaska's Learning Network; retrieved June 30, 2014; http://www.aklearn.net/frequently-asked-questions-2/
[116] Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education; retrieved July 26, 2013; http://acpe.alaska.gov/STUDENT-PARENT/Grants_Scholarships/Alaska_Performance_Scholarship

course enrollments. Districts pay $150 per semester for each student's course enrollment and receive the student's full FTE from the state. The state legislature is providing additional funding of $850,000 to AKLN for SY 2014–15.

AKLN is a coalition of all 53 Alaska school districts and is managed by a 15-member Advisory Board representing five regions of the state. Through SY 2012–13 AKLN was overseen by the state's director of technology, but in September 2013 the administrative structure shifted; the University of Alaska Southeast School of Education now operates AKLN under a memorandum of agreement with the Alaska Department of Education & Early Development.[117]

Digital programs

Alaska Virtual Academy (AKVA), managed by K12 Inc., is offered through the Wrangell Public School District and is the only fully online school serving students statewide; it served 76 K–8 students in SY 2013–14, a decrease of 54% from the previous year. Fairbanks B.E.S.T. is a single-district digital learning program that served 290 students K–12 in SY 2013–14, reflecting little increase since SY 2012–13.[118] A state listing of correspondence schools includes 31 programs;[119] 14 are statewide programs (a mix of full-time, homeschool, and supplemental programs), with the majority offering some online resources.

The distributed nature of the Alaskan populace has led to extensive use of classroom video conferencing to maximize course offerings and, more recently, to uptake of online learning in certain districts—and those enrolling large numbers of Native American students in particular (with the aid of federal funding, e.g. the Alaska Native Education Equity Program).[120] The Kodiak Island Borough School District pioneered the use of video conferencing to deliver synchronous courses to remote sites,[121] a model that has been replicated in several districts.

In 2014, the Alaska Department of Education & Early Development launched the Alaska Digital Teaching Initiative.[122] The goal of this three-year project is to provide grants to districts to strengthen existing digital learning programs, and expand them to serve students in other smaller, rural districts. By improving access for rural students to rigorous high school courses, it supports the Alaska Performance Scholarship, which is awarded to Alaska students who go to college in Alaska. As of July 2014, eight district grant applications have been submitted.

State policies

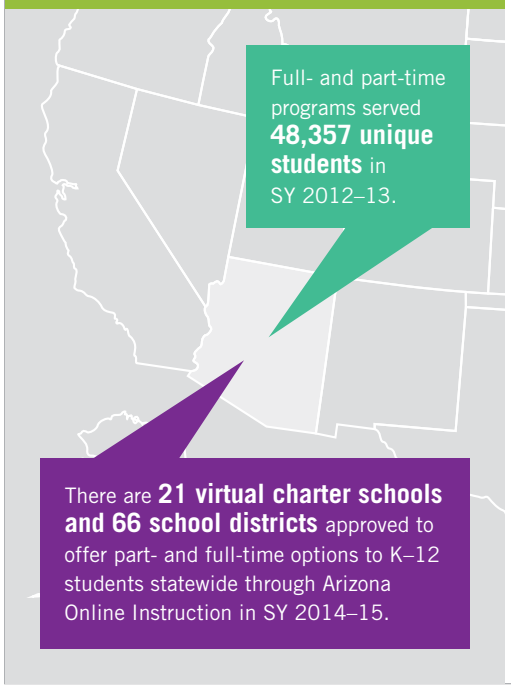
AAC 33.405 – 4 AAC 33.490[123] apply to correspondence study programs offered by a school district, including statewide correspondence (such as online) study programs. Whether enrolled full time or part time, at least 50% of a student's remote coursework must be core courses.[124]

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 can enroll its students in online and blended courses that do not affect the per-student formula funding. Additional state policy information related to digital learning is available at www.kpk12.com/states/.

[117] UAS to Operate Alaska's Learning Network; retrieved July 17, 2014; http://www.eed.state.ak.us/news/releases/2013/AKLN_release_July_2013.pdf
[118] Personal communication with Kathy Hughes, Principal, Fairbanks B.E.S.T, June 30, 2014
[119] Alaska Department of Education & Early Development, Correspondence Program Directory; retrieved June 30, 2014; http://www.eed.state.ak.us/alaskan_schools/corres/pdf/correspondence_school_directory.pdf
[120] Alaska Native Education Equity 2013 grant awards; retrieved July 18, 2014; http://www2.ed.gov/programs/alaskanative/2013awards.htm
[121] Innovation in Rural Alaska; retrieved July 17, 2014; http://www.districtadministration.com/article/innovation-rural-alaska
[122] Alaska's Digital Teaching Initiative; retrieved July 17, 2014; http://www.education.alaska.gov/forms/edtech/05-14-043.docx
[123] AAC 33.405 - 4 AAC 33.490; retrieved July 17, 2014; http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/folioproxy.asp?url=http://wwwjnu01.legis.state.ak.us/cgi-bin/folioisa.dll/aac/query=[group+!274+aac+33!2E405!27!3A]/doc/{@1}/hits_only
[124] Correspondence Program Rights and Expectations; retrieved July 17, 2014; http://education.alaska.gov/Alaskan_Schools/corres/pdf/parental_rights.pdf

Arizona

DIGITAL LEARNING STATE SNAPSHOT



Availability of online learning options

SUPPLEMENTAL			FULLY ONLINE		
K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)	K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)
SOME	SOME	MOST	ALL	ALL	ALL

Availability of info: Great, Good, **Fair**, Poor, Minimal

Does this state have…

	Y	N
Student choice for publicly funded fully online schools?	●	
Student choice for publicly funded supplemental online courses?	●	
SVS or another publicly funded option for private / homeschool students?	●	
Prior public school attendance requirement for online schools?		●
Online caps by class, school, district, or statewide?		●
PD requirement for online teachers?		●
State approval process for online providers?	●	
State approval process for online courses?		●
Online learning requirement for students?		●
End-of-course exams?		●
Separate state reporting of online course enrollments?	●	

Any authorized AOI program can serve any K–12 student with part- or full-time options.

With restrictions.

Mesa Distance Learning courses are free to Arizona homeschooled students.

To be in AOI, school districts apply to State Board of Ed.; charters apply to State Board of Charter Schools.

Schools participating in AOI must provide an annual report.

There are 66 school districts and 21 charter schools authorized to provide both fully online and supplemental online options through the Arizona Online Instruction (AOI) program in SY 2014–15, making Arizona a course choice state. There are also some blended options for students. The 74 AOI programs authorized to serve students in SY 2012–13 reported 48,357 unique students in full- and part-time programs in that year, the most recent year for which data are available.[125]

What started as the Technology Assisted Project-Based Instruction (TAPBI) pilot program evolved into AOI in 2009; the history of that transition can be found at http://kpk12.com/states. Any of the 227 districts or 600+ charter schools in the state can apply to start an online program. New applications were not accepted for SY 2013–14, as proposed legislation would have changed the state's approval process (the bill was not approved), but new programs were approved for SY 2014–15. 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 2014, 66 public school districts were approved to operate 68 programs, 10 of which were authorized to serve students beginning in kindergarten; the remaining programs serve a mix of middle and high school students.[126] In addition, 21 authorized virtual charter schools serve students across K–12.[127]

[125] Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction 2012–13, released January 2014; retrieved July 9, 2014; http://www.azed.gov/superintendent/files/2014/03/safr-2013-volume-i.pdf. AOI reports the total number of unique students who took at least one online course; while the report also notes there were 15,297 full-time students, this is a count of fundable ADM generated by AOI students, and not an accurate count of full-time students. SY 2013–14 enrollments will be posted at www.kpk12.com/states when released.

[126] List of approved public school district Arizona Online Instruction (AOI) Programs as of April 2014; retrieved June 30, 2014; http://www.azed.gov/state-board-education/files/2014/06/list-of-aoi-districts-2014.pdf

[127] List of virtual charters approved by the Arizona State Board for Charter Schools as of November 13, 2014; retrieved June 30, 2014; https://d1ca0k71pbffpb.cloudfront.net/sites/default/files/Distance%20Learning%20Schools%20List%20Revised%2011-6-2013.pdf

In SY 2012–13, 74 programs served 48,357 students in full- and part-time programs (state reporting identifies unique students who took at least one course through AOI, and cannot distinguish between full- and part-time students). Any student can apply to any approved provider in the state (and to multiple providers) for up to three individual courses or whole programs, as long as the provider has capacity to serve that student. ARS §15-701.01(H) required receiving districts to accept credits earned at a charter or district, but allowed the receiving district to determine whether the credit will count as elective or core credit.[128]

Primavera Online High School is the largest AOI program, serving 19,718 unique students in SY 2012–13. It offers 6-week intensive courses in a year-round format, and served about 6,000 students in summer 2014. Mesa Distance Learning Program served 975 full-time and 15,233 part-time students for a total of 16,208 unique students in SY 2013–14, an annual increase of 9%. Of these, 63% were from outside the Mesa district boundaries, while less than 1% were from out-of-state.

Online learning policy can be found in ARS 15-808.[129] Schools participating in AOI must provide an annual report describing the program and how student achievement is measured. Schools also must survey students annually and include survey results 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 annually on November 15. Funding for online courses and programs is as follows:

- ADM of a pupil in an AOI program cannot exceed 1.0 FTE. 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 attendance data that determines the percentage of instructional time the student spends in each school.[130]
- Programs must maintain a daily 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),[131] whereas virtual public schools receive funding based on prior-year enrollments (ARS 15-901-A-13). The base funding amount for virtual charter school students is $3,326, plus $1,600 for elementary students and $1,900 for high school students.

SB1293 (2013) created an outcome-based pilot program to identify innovative ways to fund students based on school performance and improvement other than pupil enrollment.[132] The pilot funding was to be awarded to 10 programs, two of which offered an online option, each year for four years. According to the SBE, "all vendors applying for the pilot were unable to provide assessments sufficiently aligned to all skills and outcomes established by the joint legislative committee on outcome-based funding. Due to the unavailability of sufficiently aligned assessments, the SBE was unable to fulfill the remaining requirements of the law and cannot begin implementation of the simulated pilot program."[133]

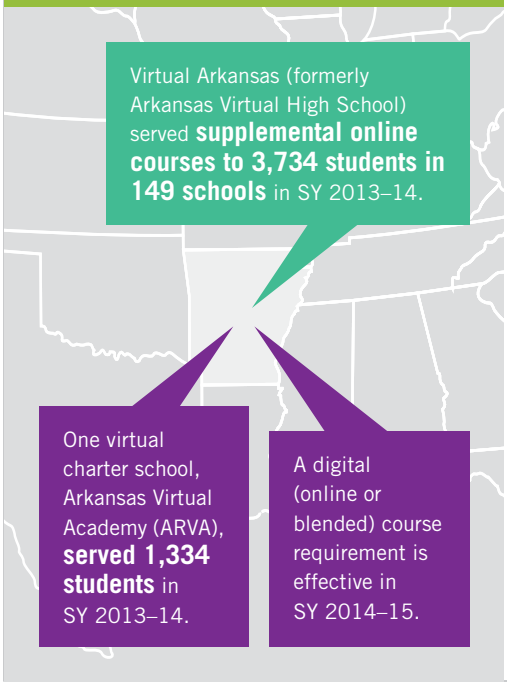
SB1488 (2014) allots $546,800 to launch a two-year pilot for a K–6 technology-based language development and literacy intervention program.[134] The SBE is directed to select one educational technology provider that meets the requirements laid out in the legislation, including the ability to differentiate and individualize instruction.

Additional policy history and funding details can be found at http://kpk12.com/states.

[128] ARS §15-701.01(H); retrieved July 18, 2014; http://www.azleg.state.az.us/ars/15/00701-01.htm
[129] ARS 15-808; retrieved June 30, 2014; http://www.azleg.gov/FormatDocument.asp?inDoc=/ars/15/00808.htm&Title=15&DocType=ARS
[130] FTE funding; June 30, 2014, http://www.azauditor.gov/ASD/PDF/Charter_Schools/USFRCS_Memo_%2083.pdf
[131] ARS 15-185; retrieved June 30, 2014; http://www.azleg.gov/FormatDocument.asp?inDoc=/ars/15/00185.htm&Title=15&DocType=ARS
[132] SB1293 (2013); retrieved July 7, 2014; http://www.azleg.gov/legtext/51leg/1r/laws/0105.pdf
[133] Personal communication with the state board of education, July 18, 2014
[134] SB1488 (2014); retrieved July 14, 2014; http://www.azleg.gov/search/oop/qfullhit.asp?CiWebHitsFile=/legtext/51leg/2r/laws/0017.htm&CiRestriction=%22language+development%22+and+%22literacy+intervention+pilot+program%22

Arkansas

DIGITAL LEARNING STATE SNAPSHOT



Availability of online learning options

SUPPLEMENTAL			FULLY ONLINE		
K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)	K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)
NONE	NONE	SOME	SOME	SOME	NONE

Availability of info:
Great
Good
Fair
Poor
Minimal

Does this state have…

	Y	N
Student choice for publicly funded fully online schools?	●	
Student choice for publicly funded supplemental online courses?		●
SVS or another publicly funded option for private / homeschool students?		●
Prior public school attendance requirement for online schools?	●	
Online caps by class, school, district, or statewide?	●	
PD requirement for online teachers?		●
State approval process for online providers?	●	
State approval process for online courses?		●
Online learning requirement for students?	●	
End-of-course exams?	●	
Separate state reporting of online course enrollments?		●

ARVA is allowed to have no more than 500 non-prior public students.

On statewide enrollments and students per class in virtual schools, for synchronous courses only.

SY 2013-14 pilots were online, but requirement is "digital" (online or blended).

In 3 subjects.

Arkansas has one main supplemental program, one fully online school, and a digital learning graduation requirement. In SY 2013–14 Virtual Arkansas served 3,734 online supplemental courses to students in 149 schools, an 87% enrollment increase. In summer 2014 Virtual Arkansas assumed the responsibilities of the former Arkansas Distance Learning (ARDL) Consortium, and now manages all state distance learning services.[135] There is one fully online statewide charter school, Arkansas Virtual Academy (ARVA), which served 1,334 students in grades K–8 in SY 2013–14. A statewide digital (online or blended) learning requirement that was piloted in some districts in SY 2013–14 is in effect for all students statewide as of SY 2014–15 for students graduating in 2018.

In SY 2014–15 Virtual Arkansas is completing a transition into the role of primary coordinator of digital learning services, replacing first Arkansas Virtual High School (AVHS, the state virtual school since 2000) in 2012, and then the former Arkansas Distance Learning Consortium (ARDL) in 2013. In addition to serving 3,734 supplemental course enrollments in SY 2013–14, there were roughly 12,000 digital students enrolled through the ARDL consortium (the same number as in SY 2012–13). These will all be Virtual Arkansas students from SY 2014–15, as ARDL is now part of Virtual Arkansas. Arkansas school districts pay a $2,500 annual membership fee to schedule courses with state-approved, state-funded providers, which is supplemented by an additional charge of $25 per student (reduced to $15 per student for content-only services). Previously four providers delivered courses synchronously using compressed interactive video. However, from SY 2014–15 no synchronous courses are available; all materials are available through the Moodle learning management system only.

[135] Personal communication with Virtual Arkansas; July 20, 2014

Virtual Arkansas is managed by the state coordinator of K–12 digital learning, in partnership with the education service cooperatives (ESC) of Arkansas. It is funded through an annual Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) grant, managed by the Arch Ford ESC, the fiscal agent for Virtual Arkansas. In SY 2013–14, it added two new campuses (for three total), located and managed by other cooperatives.[136] "Team Digital," newly established for SY 2014–15, is comprised of the state coordinator and six digital learning support specialists who work within designated ESCs. School districts and schools not participating in Virtual Arkansas may offer digital courses through state-approved providers. Courses offered by providers not already approved by the state must be approved by ADE through a separate process.[137]

Arkansas's only statewide virtual charter school, ARVA, is operated by K12 Inc. The ARVA enrollment cap was raised from 500 to 3,000 for SY 2013–14;[138] the school is allowed to have no more than 500 non-prior public students. In SY 2013–14 it served 1,334 fully online students, a 167% increase.[139] 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.

Online learning is guided by the ADE Rules Governing Distance Learning that were updated in 2012, which established guidelines requiring a calendar and bell schedule aligned with local schools to allow students to "optimally participate in synchronous distance learning and local courses."[140] Act 1280 (2013),[141] the Digital Learning Act of 2013, expanded on these rules as follows:

- Presented criteria for becoming an approved digital provider, including mapping to state standards and utilizing teachers not necessarily certified by the state, and required the ADE annually publish a list of approved providers; 23 providers were approved for SY 2014–15 as of August 1, 2014.[142]
- Created a digital learning requirement that was piloted in SY 2013–14, and expanded statewide in SY 2014–15. All public school districts and charter schools must provide at least one digital (online or blended) learning course with outcomes measurable through student assessment. Students graduating in 2018 are the first with this requirement in place.
- Prevented the SBE from limiting the number of digital learning courses for which a student may receive credit and ensured that courses may be used as both primary and secondary methods of instruction.
- Directed the house committee on education and the senate committee (in collaboration with the ADE, the department of information systems, and Arkansas service providers) to prepare a study on methods to deliver a quality digital learning environment in each school district and public charter school. The report was delivered in May 2014.[143]

To address the urgency of implementing the statewide digital learning requirement (and putting in place a provider approval process), "emergency basis" rules were in effect from February 13, 2014 to June 18, 2014. These, in conjunction with the May 2014 study, resulted in the Rules Governing the Digital Learning Act of 2013 (June 2014), which clarifies the definitions of "online learning," "blended learning," "digital learning," and "digital learning provider." A full digital learning provider application is included.[144]

[136] Arch Ford Annual Report 2013–14; retrieved July 20, 2014; http://www.archford.org/vimages/shared/vnews/stories/47067a8c5408a/Annual%20Report%202013-2014%20(1).pdf

[137] Course approvals; retrieved July 21, 2014; http://www.arkansased.org/divisions/learning-services/curriculum-and-instruction/course-approvals

[138] The virtual school enrollment caps in Act 1309 (2013) will eventually apply to all schools. Retrieved July 21, 2014; http://www.arkleg.state.ar.us/assembly/2013/2013R/Acts/Act1309.pdf

[139] ADE Data Center Enrollment Count by School; retrieved August 12, 2014; https://adedata.arkansas.gov/statewide/Schools/EnrollmentCount.aspx?year=24&search=virtual&pagesize=10

[140] ADE Rules Governing Distance Learning; retrieved July 2, 2014; http://170.94.37.152/REGS/005.15.12-001F-12833.pdf

[141] Act 1280 (2013); retrieved July 21, 2014, http://www.arkansased.org/public/userfiles/Legislative_Services/Quality%20Digital%20Learning%20Study/Facts/Act%201280%20Digital%20Learning%20Opportunities.pdf

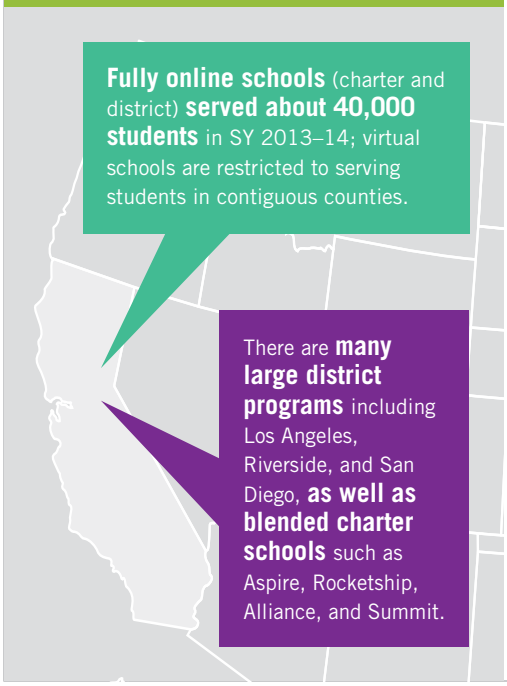
[142] Digital Learning Approved Provider List; retrieved July 21, 2014; http://www.arkansased.org/public/userfiles/Learning_Services/Digital_Learning/DLP_AR_Approved_List_041414.pdf

[143] Quality Digital Learning Study; retrieved July 21, 2014; http://www.arkansased.org/divisions/policy/quality-digital-learning-study

[144] ADE Rules Governing the Digital Learning Act of 2013; retrieved July 21, 2014; http://www.sos.arkansas.gov/rulesRegs/Arkansas%20Register/2014/may14Reg/005.23.14-002.pdf. See also emergency basis rules at http://www.arkansased.org/public/userfiles/rules/Current/Digital_Learning_Rules_Emergency_Adoption_for_Posting_February_2014.pdf.

California

DIGITAL LEARNING STATE SNAPSHOT



Availability of online learning options

SUPPLEMENTAL			FULLY ONLINE		
K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)	K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)
NONE	SOME	SOME	MOST	MOST	MOST

Availability of info: Great, Good, Fair, **Poor**, Minimal

Does this state have…

	Y	N
Student choice for publicly funded fully online schools?	●	
Student choice for publicly funded supplemental online courses?		●
SVS or another publicly funded option for private / homeschool students?		●
Prior public school attendance requirement for online schools?		●
Online caps by class, school, district, or statewide?	●	
PD requirement for online teachers?		●
State approval process for online providers?		●
State approval process for online courses?		●
Online learning requirement for students?		●
End-of-course exams?		●
Separate state reporting of online course enrollments?		●

Virtual charters capped at 25 students per class; can only serve students in contiguous counties.

Most online courses must be reviewed to qualify for UC a-g approval.

California has more districts and charter schools recognized for incorporating online and blended learning than any other state. Blended learning examples include programs in the Riverside, Oakland, and Los Angeles districts, and charter schools including Aspire, Summit, Flex Academies, and Rocketship; in addition, there are at least 42 fully virtual schools that collectively provide all students in the state access to a fully online school. These latter schools are restricted by a requirement that they serve students in contiguous counties only, so the number of schools is higher than it is in states that allow for statewide online enrollment.[145] California does not have a state virtual school, and students have access to supplemental online courses only if those courses are offered by their district or a district partner.

Data on digital learning in California come from two primary sources that offer conflicting information. The California Department of Education reports 56,637 students taking one or more online courses, an annual decrease of 15%, and 14,177 students taking 50% or more of their classes online (a 17% decrease).[146,147]

[145] The reason for this is that education management organizations (EMOs) often operate only one fully online school in other states, drawing students from across the state. In California some EMOs operate multiple schools because of the contiguous counties requirement.

[146] CDE has attempted to identify all schools and programs in the state that deliver at least 30% of their instruction online. A searchable map that tags synchronous, asynchronous, and blended learning programs, as well as public, private, and charter programs, is available at http://www2.cde.ca.gov/coep/imagemap.aspx.

[147] California Basic Education Data System; online enrollment data as of August 24, 2014; http://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/DQ/EducOpt.aspx?TheYear=2013-14&TheRpt=StAltEd&cLevel=State&cTopic=Enrollment&rCode=2&CDSCode=00000000000000

The eLearning Census run by the California Learning Resource Network (CLRN) [148] reports[149] the following:

- "[T]he virtual student population has remained stable since 2012" at about 24,000 students.
- The number of blended students has increased 49% since 2013. Based on extrapolating from the 31% of districts that responded to the survey, CLRN believes that the number of California students in blended learning is perhaps 250,000.[150]
- [T]he top 25% of districts and charters continue to contribute a significant proportion of the total eLearning population, [but] … eLearning adoption is broadening across a greater percentage of schools and … the number of participating students at each school is steadily rising."
- Charter schools are adopting elearning at far faster rates than traditional districts (287% growth compared to 43% growth), although districts have more blended students because the large majority of students attend public non-charter schools.

A growing number of districts and charter schools offer blended, supplemental, and/or full-time options to students. These include:

- Rocketship Education, which enrolled 4,684 students in eight elementary schools in the San Jose area in SY 2013–14, an increase of 49%."[151]
- KIPP Empower Academy in Los Angeles, a member of the Knowledge is Power (KIPP) charter management organization and one of the first KIPP schools to implement a blended model.
- Aspire Public Schools, which has 35 schools in California serving over 12,000 students.
- Alliance College-Ready Public Schools, which operates 10 blended schools: five middle schools, and five high schools.[152]
- District-run blended schools that serve students in Los Altos Elementary School District, Santa Clara County, and Los Angeles, among others. In addition, the Silicon Schools Fund provides seed funding for blended learning schools, either in the form of multi-year launch grants or single-year planning grants. It has funded 12 schools in the San Francisco area; launch grants were awarded to Alpha Public Schools, Summit Public Schools, Navigator Schools, and Caliber Schools.[153]

As of January 2013, Scout from the University of California took over management of the University of California Online Academy (UCOA), which built on over a decade of course and content development from UC College Prep. Scout is a state program that received $2 million in SY 2013–14 under the Student Academic Preparation and Educational Partnerships program to offer Advanced Placement®, honors, and "a-g" college preparation online courses. (The University of California (UC) and California State University (CSU) designed "a-g" policy standards[154] that all courses must meet to satisfy the UC and CSU entrance requirements.) California public schools, teachers, or students may choose to use Scout's courses to supplement existing curriculum, or as stand-alone courses (although it does not grant credit; students must coordinate with their school to receive credit and/or a grade). Scout offers three options: a free version available to students and teachers, a version with more tools and support for a small fee, or a teacher-led version for a larger fee. About 4,000 students registered for courses in SY 2013–14, an increase of 300% over the previous year.

[148] The California Learning Resource Network (CLRN) is a statewide education technology service of the CDE that was administered by the Stanislaus County Office of Education. It lost its state funding in June 2014.
[149] California eLearning Census 2014; retrieved June 11, 2014; http://www.clrn.org/census/eLearning%20Census_Report_2014.pdf
[150] Personal communication with Brian Bridges, the Director of CLRN until it ceased operations in June 2014
[151] Du, Laura Y. The Potential of K–12 Blended Learning: Preliminary Evidence from California Schools (2014), retrieved from http://issuu.com/lauradu/docs/du-californiablendedlearningpreview. Achievement data referenced in this profile are sourced from this paper.
[152] Alliance College-Ready Public Schools, BLAST Schools; retrieved July 21, 2014; http://www.laalliance.org/apps/pages/index.jsp?uREC_ID=191024&type=d&pREC_ID=395157
[153] Silicon Schools Fund, School Awards; retrieved July 21, 2014, http://www.siliconschools.com/our-schools/
[154] a-g policy website; retrieved June 12, 2014; http://www.ucop.edu/agguide/

State policies

Digital programs in California are governed by a series of laws detailed at www.kpk12.com/states/. Funding for online courses is tied to one of two methods:

- Independent study regulations for all non-classroom based instruction, including student-teacher ratios; this includes virtual charter schools.[155] Alternative education programs operate under these guidelines as a path toward offering digital programs in credit recovery, credit accrual, and credit advancement. The regulations changed with the 2014–15 California State Budget, eliminating requirements for independent study teachers to sign and date all student work, streamlining the independent study process for digital content.[156]
- Alternatively, schools may choose to offer online courses in school, under direct control of a teacher, where students attend and generate funds via ADA calculations.

The 2014–15 budget bill also includes a provision that allows schools to identify the independent study hours associated with full courses as opposed to determining hours for each student in each independent study experience separately.

AB644 (2012)[157] allows for synchronous, online instruction when computing ADA for students in grades 9–12 beginning in SY 2014–15.

In May 2012, the UC Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools (BOARS) released requirements for approval of K–12 online courses and programs. Based on those requirements, a specific policy for a-g review of online courses was released in August 2012.[158] Courses first must be assessed against the iNACOL *Standards for Quality Online Courses* (previously by CLRN, or in some instances via self-assessment), and then courses may be submitted to UC for the a-g review.

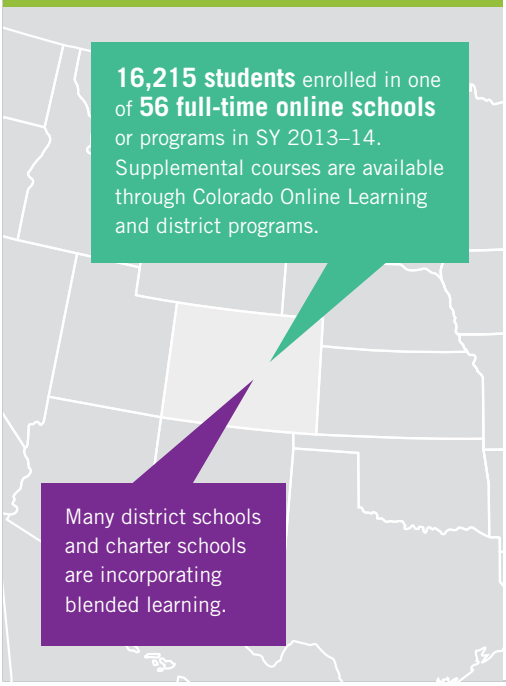
CLRN was a state-funded project that reviewed online courses, supplemental electronic learning resources, and open educational resources (OER) for their alignment to California's original content standards, the Common Core State Standards, and California's Social Content Criteria. It had certified 515 courses (or 75% of all courses reviewed) as of June 2014 when funding for CLRN and most categorical programs was eliminated.

A consortium of public and private agencies, including many in California, fund the Leading Edge Certification in an effort to address a perceived 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.[159]

[155] Independent study requirements; retrieved June 12, 201; http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/eo/is/
[156] California State Budget 2014–2015 Summary; retrieved July 31, 2014; http://www.ebudget.ca.gov/FullBudgetSummary.pdf
[157] AB644 (2012); June 12, 2014; http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201120120AB644
[158] A-G Guide – Online courses; retrieved June 12, 2014; http://www.ucop.edu/agguide/online-learning/online-courses/index.html
[159] Leading Edge Certification; retrieved June 12, 2014; http://www.cue.org/leadingedge

Colorado

DIGITAL LEARNING STATE SNAPSHOT



Availability of online learning options

SUPPLEMENTAL			FULLY ONLINE		
K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)	K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)
NONE	NONE	SOME	ALL	ALL	ALL

Availability of info: Great **Good** Fair Poor Minimal

Does this state have…

	Y	N
Student choice for publicly funded fully online schools?	●	
Student choice for publicly funded supplemental online courses?		●
SVS or another publicly funded option for private / homeschool students?		●
Prior public school attendance requirement for online schools?		●
Online caps by class, school, district, or statewide?		●
PD requirement for online teachers?		●
State approval process for online providers?	●	
State approval process for online courses?		●
Online learning requirement for students?		●
End-of-course exams?	●	
Separate state reporting of online course enrollments?	●	

26 multi-district schools and single-district programs and schools available.

For multi-district programs only.

In 5 subjects.

Enrollments annually; comprehensive report every 5 years.

Colorado has numerous fully online programs operating across multiple districts, district-level programs that are fully online and/or supplemental, fully blended schools, and a small state virtual school. The Colorado Department of Education (CDE) reported 16,215 students enrolled in fully online programs in SY 2013–14, a decrease of 3% from the previous year.[160] There are 56 online schools and programs recognized by the Office of Online and Blended Learning as of June 2014: five multi-district charter schools; 21 multi-district schools; 10 single-district schools; 16 single-district programs authorized to serve fully online students; three single-district supplemental programs serving students within their districts;[161] and Colorado Online Learning (COL) is the state virtual school. COL reported 914 course enrollments in SY 2013–14, a 9% decrease from the previous year, following a 36% decrease in SY 2011–12.[162]

In January 2014, a task force convened with the intention of improving "the quality of education for all students in Colorado who use online learning as part or all of their access to learning."[163] The commission released its final report in March 2014, and its recommendations resulted in the passage of HB1382 (2014),[164] which accomplishes the following:

- Updates the definitions of "on-line program" and "on-line school" to allow those programs to have more flexibility in how they serve students.
- States that the records of students who transfer schools will transfer in 14 days (decreased from 30).

[160] Colorado Department of Education, *Summary Report for Online Programs*, June 2014; retrieved June 16, 2014; http://www.cde.state.co.us/sites/default/files/2014%20Online%20Summary%20Report_Final.pdf
[161] Online programs; retrieved June 15, 2014; http://www.cde.state.co.us/onlinelearning/schools.htm
[162] Enrollment numbers obtained through personal communication with Colorado Online Learning; June 25, 2014.
[163] Colorado K–12 Online Education Task Force; http://dkfoundation.org/our-work/k-12-online-education-task-force-0. The final report, released in March 2014, can be downloaded from http://dkfoundation.org/our-work/k-12-online-education-task-force-0.
[164] HB1382 (2014); retrieved June 17, 2014; http://www.statebillinfo.com/bills/bills/14/1382_enr.pdf

- Requires online schools to document student attendance and participation, and clarifies the activities that may be included in those calculations.
- Notes the task force recommendation that CDE no longer directly certify multi-district online schools, but rather certify the authorizers of these schools and eliminate its own school-level certification process. To do so, the bill creates a task force charged with identifying high-quality standards for authorizers of online programs; it will make recommendations to the state board and legislature. The task force also will oversee the development of pilot programs to begin in SY 2015–16 to test innovative initiatives in online education.

In June 2014, the state board of education (SBE) approved a two-year pilot designed to allow Title I funds to follow students to online schools.[165] Hope Online Academy Elementary School was selected as the first pilot school for a variety of reasons, though primarily because it is a multi-district online school with multiple locations where students can receive meals and Title I services. Hope's authorizer, Douglas County Schools, will receive an additional $547,072 in federal Title I money in SY 2014–15 (and likely a similar amount in 2015–16) to provide services for poor students. This is a shift from the previous funding method, which set a base funding amount for all multi-district online schools and did not allow for any additional categorical program funding.

HB11-1277 (2011)[166] significantly reduced previous reporting requirements from annual to every five years; the first report since this change was released in June 2014 and details enrollment information, student achievement and growth scores, school financial information, and accountability issues. Online enrollments in years when the five-year report is not completed are designated as any student that takes at least one online course, so data in those years cannot separate fully online students or course-level enrollments. The law also removed the time period for which certification of online schools is granted; they remain certified indefinitely until CDE has reason to believe the program is not in substantial compliance with one or more of the statutory or regulatory requirements.

HB1037 (2007)[167] provided $480,000 annually to fund a Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) to contract with a provider to offer online courses across the state for no more than $200 per student per semester. This is a primary source of funding for Colorado Online Learning, the state virtual school. SB13-139 (2013)[168] changed the RFP process previously outlined in HB1037 in an effort to expand access to supplemental online courses statewide. The contract that previously was awarded to the Mountain BOCES through HB1037 will be awarded to a "designated BOCES" in consultation with the statewide association of BOCES. That BOCES will create a proposal process by February 2015 to select one or more providers to deliver online courses and professional development, and to share best practices in digital learning.

HB12-1124 (2012) directed CDE to study the integration of digital learning into public education;[169] it recommended allowing "students to choose individual online courses and have the pro rata portion of per pupil revenue (PPR) follow the student to the provider of the online course," "driving a truly individualized education system through waivers and credit flexibility," and an expansion of broadband access.[170] As a result, SB13-139 recommended that "each high school student in Colorado must be provided the opportunity to take at least one supplemental on-line course per year." While it did not specify how that goal was to be accomplished nor provide funding, it required authorized supplemental providers (school districts, charter schools, and BOCES) to submit an annual report beginning June 1, 2015 that includes student performance data.

Details about other laws affecting online programs and students are available at www.kpk12.com/states/.

[165] Colorado State Board of Education June 11, 2014 meeting archive, part 5; retrieved June 17, 2014; http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeboard/sbe20140611. The pilot discussion begins around minute 30.
[166] HB11-1277 (2011), sections 23-28 address online learning; retrieved June 24, 2014; http://www.leg.state.co.us/clics/clics2011a/csl.nsf/fsbillcont3/A58089DC75F0EAB18725780800800FD9?open&file=1277_enr.pdf
[167] HB1037 (2007); retrieved June 24, 2014; http://www.leg.state.co.us/CLICS/CLICS2010A/csl.nsf/fsbillcont3/584ABEF08DBB8FB4872576A80026B247?Open&file=1037_enr.pdf
[168] SB13-139 (2013); retrieved June 24, 2014; http://www.leg.state.co.us/clics/clics2013a/csl.nsf/fsbillcont2/1882ECEBE469781187257AEE00572CEF/$FILE/139_01.pdf
[169] HB12-1124 (2012); retrieved June 24, 2014; http://www.cde.state.co.us/sites/default/files/documents/onlinelearning/download/hb12-1124.pdf
[170] *Digital Learning in Colorado: Opportunities and Recommendations*, January 2013; retrieved June 24, 2014; http://www.coloradokids.org/issues/k12education/digitallearning.html

Connecticut

DIGITAL LEARNING STATE SNAPSHOT

Students have **some supplemental and credit recovery options** through CT Adult Virtual High School and The Virtual High School. CT Virtual Learning (the state virtual school) closed at the end of SY 2012–13.

There are no fully online schools in Connecticut, and there is little digital learning activity at the district level.

Availability of online learning options

SUPPLEMENTAL			FULLY ONLINE		
K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)	K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)
NONE	NONE	SOME	NONE	NONE	NONE

Availability of info:
Great
Good
Fair
Poor
Minimal

Does this state have…

	Y	N
Student choice for publicly funded fully online schools?		●
Student choice for publicly funded supplemental online courses?		●
SVS or another publicly funded option for private / homeschool students?		●
Prior public school attendance requirement for online schools?		●
Online caps by class, school, district, or statewide?		●
PD requirement for online teachers?		●
State approval process for online providers?		●
State approval process for online courses?		●
Online learning requirement for students?		●
End-of-course exams?		●
Separate state reporting of online course enrollments?		●

PA 10-111 (2010) requires training for teachers in online credit recovery.

Beginning with graduating class of 2018 in 5 subjects.

Connecticut has little digital learning activity; there is one statewide online program, the Adult Virtual High School (CT AVHS). CT AVHS served an estimated 2,400 course enrollments in SY 2013–14. Seventy-three schools, 30% of the high schools in the state, are members of The Virtual High School, which served 2,300 course enrollments in the state in SY 2013–14. There is some district digital learning activity, primarily in credit recovery, although the number of course enrollments served is unknown.

Connecticut PA No. 10-111 (2010)[171] allowed middle and high school students to earn high school credit via online learning, and required districts to adopt policies for granting credit; detailed requirements can be found at www.kpk12.com/states. PA No. 10-111 also required districts with dropout rates of 8% or higher to establish online credit recovery programs; according to the state data for 2009–10, two districts of 135 in the state fall under this requirement.[172] From 2013, districts must provide student support and remedial services, including online learning options, for students beginning in 7th grade. There is no formal monitoring process by or funding from the department of education.

The Connecticut Distance Learning Consortium operates one statewide online program. CT AVHS served an estimated 2,400 course enrollments through participating adult education programs in SY 2013–14, about the same as in SY 2012–13. Connecticut operated another statewide program CT Virtual Learning, a small state virtual school, until it closed operations at the end of SY 2012–13.

[171] Public Act No. 10-111; retrieved June 23, 2014; http://www.cga.ct.gov/2010/ACT/Pa/pdf/2010PA-00111-R00SB-00438-PA.pdf
[172] Connecticut Education Data and Research; see Data Tables / Dropouts / Annual Dropout Percentage Rates Across Grades 9–12 / All Districts / Run Report). Retrieved August 9, 2014; http://sdeportal.ct.gov/Cedar/WEB/ct_report/DropoutDTViewer.aspx

Delaware

DIGITAL LEARNING STATE SNAPSHOT

The department of education offers an **online World Language Program** with Spanish and Mandarin Chinese courses; it enrolled **350 students** in 7th and 8th grades in SY 2013–14.

Delaware does not have fully online schools.

Availability of online learning options

SUPPLEMENTAL			FULLY ONLINE		
K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)	K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)
NONE	NONE	NONE	NONE	NONE	NONE

Availability of info: Great, Good, **Fair**, Poor, Minimal

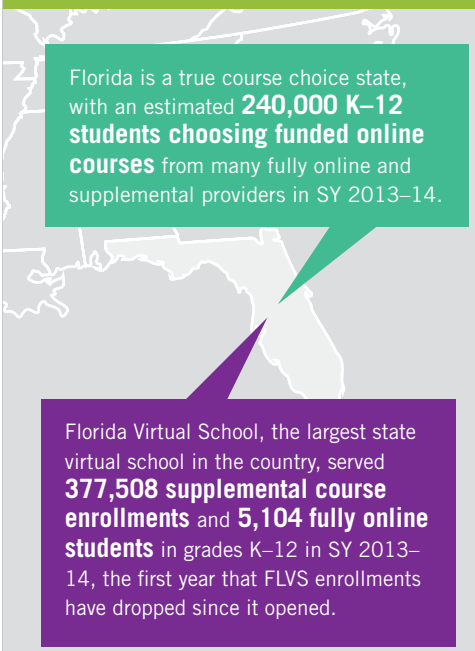
Does this state have…	Y	N
Student choice for publicly funded fully online schools?		●
Student choice for publicly funded supplemental online courses?		●
SVS or another publicly funded option for private / homeschool students?		●
Prior public school attendance requirement for online schools?		●
Online caps by class, school, district, or statewide?		●
PD requirement for online teachers?		●
State approval process for online providers?		●
State approval process for online courses?		●
Online learning requirement for students?		●
End-of-course exams?		●
Separate state reporting of online course enrollments?		●

Delaware has very little digital learning activity. Some districts use vendor-provided 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 $520 per course. The department of education provides an online World Language Program that offers online Spanish and Mandarin Chinese courses to 7th and 8th grade students. The program reported 350 enrollments in SY 2013–14.[173] In 2013, four districts formed the BRINC Consortium[174] to provide professional development on blended learning for teachers; it is taking steps to offer personalized learning for Delaware students. The 10 high schools in the consortium serve about one-third of Delaware's high school students.

[173] Online World Language Program; retrieved June 17, 2014; http://www.doe.k12.de.us/infosuites/staff/ci/content_areas/wl_immersion.shtml
[174] BRINC Consortium; retrieved June 20, 2014; http://www.brincconsortium.com/home.html

Florida

DIGITAL LEARNING STATE SNAPSHOT



Availability of online learning options

SUPPLEMENTAL			FULLY ONLINE		
K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)	K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)
ALL	ALL	ALL	ALL	ALL	ALL

Availability of info:
Great
Good
Fair
Poor
Minimal

Does this state have…

	Y	N
Student choice for publicly funded fully online schools?	●	
Student choice for publicly funded supplemental online courses?	●	
SVS or another publicly funded option for private / homeschool students?	●	
Prior public school attendance requirement for online schools?	●	
Online caps by class, school, district, or statewide?		●
PD requirement for online teachers?		●
State approval process for online providers?	●	
State approval process for online courses?	●	
Online learning requirement for students?	●	
End-of-course exams?	●	
Separate state reporting of online course enrollments?		●

Yes, eligible for some PT programs in K–1 and 6–12, and some FT options in K–12.

For VIP for PT and FT providers and virtual charters; includes all courses.

For standard diploma.

Florida is the first state in the country to legislate that all K–12 public school students have full- and part-time virtual options, and that funding follows each student down to the course level. In addition to many district programs and fully online schools, Florida Virtual School (FLVS) is the largest state virtual school in the country; it has served over 2 million course completions since it opened in 1997.[175] However, after years of consistent double-digit growth in digital learning, in SY 2013–14 the number of students taking online courses or attending online schools across the state stayed relatively flat. Enrollments in one-semester supplemental online courses, including FLVS, FLVS franchises, and district programs, dropped by about 4% to 410,000; full-time online students served stayed about the same at 14,000; and the total number of unique students served stayed about the same at around 240,000 (see Table 9 for enrollment details).

SB1514 (2013)[176] changed the funding structure for all schools, traditional and virtual, including FLVS. Previously, districts received full funding for up to six courses for each student, and FLVS received funding for all courses completed by students, whether that was a student's sixth course or courses beyond one FTE. With the passage of SB1514, students can no longer generate more than one FTE; instead, a student's FTE is distributed proportionally by the department of education (DOE) to each district (FLVS is considered a district) for as many courses as a student takes.[177] This created an incentive for districts to encourage students to take in-district courses (traditional or virtual) as the district loses money if students take an out-of-district course.

The funding changes and an increase in the number of online options at the district level resulted in reduced enrollments for the first time in FLVS history (and a corresponding increase in enrollments in the district-run

[175] Florida Virtual School 2013–14; retrieved August 5, 2014; https://www.flvs.net/areas/contactus/Documents/Florida_Virtual_School_Summary.pdf
[176] SB1514 (2013); retrieved June 27, 2014; http://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2013/1514/BillText/er/PDF
[177] Florida Public Virtual Schools Questions and Answers: Funding and Reporting; retrieved June 27, 2014; http://www.fldoe.org/Schools/virtual-schools/pdf/DistrictVIP-FAQ.pdf

options, including FLVS franchises). There was concern that districts were discouraging students from taking FLVS courses, prompting the DOE to survey districts regarding their choice options for students and whether or not they educate students and families about those options; it released a report in April 2014 finding that districts are making options available to students as required by law. However, it also found evidence that a small number of district policies or practices are restricting or hindering student choice.[178]

Digital options

Florida has a variety of digital options for students[179] in grades K–12 that are summarized in Table 9.[180]

Florida Virtual School (FLVS) served 377,508 successful supplemental course enrollments to 192,820 unique students in SY 2013–14, decreases of 8% and 7% respectively. In 2000, legislation established FLVS as an independent education entity. Legislation enacted in 2002 and 2003 granted parental rights for public school choice,[181] 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 1,263 full-time teachers and 336 part-time teachers as of August 2014. FLVS is governed by Florida Statute 1002.37;[182] students retain the right to choose FLVS courses to satisfy their educational goals.

FLVS offers a full-time online option, **FLVS FT**, operated in partnership with Connections Academy; it served 5,104 students in grades K–12 in SY 2013–14, a decrease of 5%.

Table 9: Florida's online options and corresponding enrollments[183]

Virtual program / school	Program type	Grade levels served	Student eligibility	Enrollments SY 2013–14	% change
State Level					
Florida Virtual School (FLVS)	Part-time	K–1 and 6–12 Grades 2–5	All students Per s. 1002.455	377,508 course completions	-8%
Florida Virtual School Full Time (FLVS FT)	Full-time	K–12	All students	5,104 students	-5%
District Level					
District Franchises of FLVS	Part-time	Same as FLVS	Same as FLVS	28,875 unique students	+135%
	Full-time			3,022 students 78,106 total course enrollments (PT+FT)	+1% +83%
District Virtual Instruction Programs (VIP); Provider or District-operated	Part-time	K-1 Grades 2–12	All students Per s. 1002.455	1,493 unique students	+170%
	Full-time	K–5 Grades 6–12	All students Per s. 1002.455	4,659 students (*not including the 3,022 from the district franchises)	-3%
District Virtual Course Offerings	Part-time	K–1 Grades 2–12	All students Per s. 1002.455	4,648 unique students	+3%
	Full-time	K–5	All students Per s. 1002.455		
Virtual Charter Schools	Full-time	K–5 6–12	All students per s. 1002.455	670 unique students	+544%

All students = Public, private, and home education students

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.

[178] Florida Department of Education, Student Choice and Access; retrieved August 6, 2014; http://www.redefinedonline.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Choice-Access-Report_-FINAL.pdf

[179] Virtual education website; June 30, 2014; http://www.fldoe.org/Schools/virtual-schools/

[180] Table based on Florida's Public Virtual Education Options 2014–15; retrieved August 15, 2014; http://www.fldoe.org/Schools/virtual-schools/pdf/veof.pdf

[181] Florida Statutes 1002.20 and 1001.42 regarding school choice; retrieved June 27, 2014; 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

[182] Florida Statute 1002.37; retrieved June 27, 2014; http://www.leg.state.fl.us/Statutes/index.cfm?App_mode=Display_Statute&Search_String=&URL=1000-1099/1002/Sections/1002.37.html

[183] Supplemental courses are reported as number of course enrollments in one-semester courses where available, and unique students who took at least one online course in all other cases. Fully online students are reported as the number of unique students. Enrollment numbers obtained from personal communication, Florida Department of Education, August 8, 2014.

The first two **virtual charter schools** opened in SY 2012–13 in Osceola School District; seven virtual charter schools in six school districts served 670 students in SY 2013–14. K12 Inc. also operates a small statewide non-charter online school, which served 8 students in SY 2013–14.

Through the **Virtual Instruction Program** (VIP), all Florida school districts offer part- and full-time virtual instruction programs for students in grades K–12. For some districts, franchises of FLVS are used to meet this requirement. There were 6,152 unique students served through part- and full-time VIP programs in SY 2013–14, an annual increase of 15%. Most districts operate more than one virtual program under the VIP umbrella, and the number of options continues to increase due to a requirement for many districts to offer at least three options at all grade levels. Many smaller districts are sharing resources and entering into agreements with regional education consortia to provide their required virtual options.

District Franchises of FLVS allow districts to use FLVS courses with their own teachers. Two regional consortia (the Panhandle Area Educational Consortium and the North East Florida Educational Consortium) representing 27 districts, and an additional 29 districts independently, representing 56 out of 67 districts statewide, operated franchises of FLVS in 2013–14. The franchises reported over 78,106 half-credit completions in both part- and full-time programs in SY 2013–14, an 83% increase over the previous year. Districts may use their franchises to meet VIP requirements, and they also serve homeschooled, private school, and out-of-district public school students.

District Virtual Course Offerings: Districts also may offer online courses for grades K–12 outside of their VIP and district franchises. Beginning with SY 2013–14, students can cross district lines to take online courses from other districts regardless of whether the course is offered in their district.

Students also have some **blended options**. FLVS has Virtual Learning Labs in most districts where students can take an online FLVS class in their local school with access to a local teacher. Volusia Virtual School is working with all high schools in its district (about 15) to offer economics and American Government in a blended learning environment, fulfilling the online learning requirement for seniors. Pivot Charter School operates three locations in the state (Ft. Myers, Tampa, and Ft. Lauderdale) that allow students to access an individualized online curriculum from learning centers with certified teachers.

State policies

Florida has a long history of legislation affecting online learning; the details of that history can be found on the *Keeping Pace* website at www.kpk12.com/states. All of Florida's virtual schools and programs are designated by law as school choice options[184] for Florida families.

SB850 (2014)[185] requires the DOE to provide web-based professional development to help teachers integrate digital instruction into classrooms. In addition, it changed the state's online learning requirement by allowing students to take online driver education courses, the only course previously excluded from counting toward the requirement.

HB5101 (2014)[186] creates a Digital Classrooms Allocation that will "support school district and school efforts and strategies to improve outcomes related to student performance by integrating technology in classroom teaching and learning." All funds expended must be outlined in a digital classroom plan which must be developed by each district, as well as an overall state plan to be developed by the Office of Technology and Information Services by October 2014. Each district is guaranteed a minimum of $250,000, with additional funds going to larger districts. HB5101 also addresses a concern about students not being aware of virtual

[184] School choice options; retrieved June 27, 2014; http://info.fldoe.org/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-5250/dps-2009-007.pdf
[185] SB850 (2014); retrieved July 16, 2014; https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2014/0850/BillText/er/PDF
[186] HB5101 (2014); retrieved July 16, 2014; https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2014/5101/BillText/er/PDF. Also see Digital Classrooms Plan and Allocation at http://www.fldoe.org/bii/instruct_tech/.

options, and requires that at the beginning of every school year all districts must notify students and parents of their right to choose a virtual program.

In 2013, the DOE[187] added a data element to the statewide student information system so that every student who enrolls for at least 14 days will be counted as enrolled, even if they disenroll, so as to calculate comprehensive completion rates for all online programs. Implementation is in progress, and data are expected to be available in 2015.

HB7029 (2013)[188] accomplished four primary goals:

- Allowed students to take courses from other districts even if the course is offered in their local district.
- Required the DOE to develop an online course catalog, which launched in July 2014 and includes courses offered by district virtual schools, FLVS, and providers approved by the DOE.[189] It will provide a method for students and teachers to provide evaluative feedback; completion and passage rates will be added to the catalog in the next year.
- Required the DOE to develop the Florida Approved Courses and Tests (FACT) initiative by SY 2015–16 to expand student choice and online course options to include MOOCs, fully online courses, and blended courses. In addition, it required a new approval process for course and MOOC providers; these courses will be added to the state catalog when available.
- Required the DOE submit a report to the legislature providing recommendations for online and competency-based online courses and MOOCs, improving access to online courses, as well as approving, funding, and holding providers accountable; the report was submitted in February 2014.[190] The report notes that all courses must align with Florida content and standards, providers must include end-of-course exams where required, the DOE will maintain and develop accountability models, and districts should provide local support for students enrolled in MOOCs. The DOE intends to begin the first approval process in November 2014.

CS/CS/HB7063 (2012)[191] authorized part-time courses for elementary students through FLVS, clarified the online learning requirement passed in 2011, and linked funding for both online and brick-and-mortar students to end-of-course exams beginning in SY 2016–17.

Funding

VIP programs and virtual charter schools are funded through the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP) when a student successfully completes a course. Districts receive FEFP funding for each student and may operate their own programs, or they may negotiate with their virtual instruction providers for rates below the per-pupil funding. Completions are defined by 1011.61[192] as earning passing grades or credits for online courses, or the prescribed level of content that counts toward promotion to the next grade. Base funding for virtual programs in SY 2014–15 increased by $30 to $5,230 per full-time virtual education student completion; this equates to less than $5,230 per student when taking into account students who do not complete. If a student takes six courses, then the per-course completion funding will remain at $435.83. However, with SB1514, a student's FTE is prorated based on the total number of courses, which can be more than six, and therefore less than $435.83 per course completion.

FLVS will receive an estimated $135 million in funding in SY 2014–15, a 23% decrease from the previous year. FLVS FT is eligible for categorical funding in addition to basic education funding, including exceptional student education (ESE) and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL).

[187] Florida Department of Education, Database Manual; retrieved June 27, 2014; http://www.fldoe.org/eias/dataweb/default.asp
[188] HB7029 (2013); retrieved June 27, 2014; http://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2013/7029/BillText/er/PDF
[189] Florida Online Course Catalog; retrieved August 8, 2014; http://app4.fldoe.org/coursecatalog/
[190] The February 2014 FACT Report is available from the FLDOE. If published by the legislature, it will be made available on the *Keeping Pace* website.
[191] CS/CS/HB7063 (2012); retrieved June 27, 2014; http://www.myfloridahouse.gov/Sections/Bills/billsdetail.aspx?BillId=48958
[192] Florida Statute 1011.61; retrieved June 27, 2014; http://www.leg.state.fl.us/Statutes/index.cfm?App_mode=Display_Statute&Search_String=&URL=1000-1099/1011/Sections/1011.61.html

Georgia

DIGITAL LEARNING STATE SNAPSHOT

Georgia Virtual School is one of the larger state virtual schools with **33,041 course enrollments** in SY 2013–14. Students (grades 9–12) may enroll in online courses in GAVS without approval of the student's home district.

Three statewide fully online schools enrolled **18,035 students** in SY 2013–14, a 34% increase over the previous year. Eight districts provide fully online options for resident students.

Availability of online learning options

SUPPLEMENTAL			FULLY ONLINE		
K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)	K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)
NONE	SOME	MOST	ALL	ALL	ALL

Availability of info: Great **Good** Fair Poor Minimal

Does this state have…

	Y	N
Student choice for publicly funded fully online schools?	●	
Student choice for publicly funded supplemental online courses?	●	
SVS or another publicly funded option for private / homeschool students?	●	
Prior public school attendance requirement for online schools?		●
Online caps by class, school, district, or statewide?		●
PD requirement for online teachers?		●
State approval process for online providers?		●
State approval process for online courses?		●
Online learning requirement for students?		●
End-of-course exams?		●
Separate state reporting of online course enrollments?	●	

Students in grades 9–12 do not need district approval to enroll in GAVS.

Limited number funded by the state through GAVS.

The Online Clearinghouse has not yet established a process for reviewing providers.

Districts identify online enrollments when reporting FTE to Data Collections division of the GaDOE.

Georgia students have access to digital learning options through the state virtual school (Georgia Virtual School, GAVS), which served 33,041 course enrollments; several district programs; and three statewide fully online schools that enrolled 18,035 students in SY 2013–14, an annual increase of 34%. In 2012, the Georgia Legislature passed three bills that significantly impacted digital learning policy. SB289[193] affected all school districts in Georgia and included the following provisions:

- Allowed students in grades 9–12 to enroll in online courses in GAVS without approval of the student's home district, "regardless of whether the school in which the student is enrolled offers the same course." A limit of one GAVS course per semester per student was eliminated.
- All districts must provide written information on both part- and full-time online learning options to parents of all grades 3–12 students.
- Prohibited school boards from enacting policies to keep students from online classes during the school day.
- Required that publishers of textbooks recommended by the state board of education (SBE) provide electronic versions of such textbooks.

Virtual charters have a tumultuous history in Georgia, particularly regarding authorization and funding; details of that history can be found at www.kpk12.com/states/. The challenges were resolved with the

[193] SB289 (2012); retrieved June 24, 2014; http://www.legis.ga.gov/legislation/en-US/display/20112012/SB/289

passage of a 2012 ballot referendum that amended the state constitution and created an independent state-level charter school authorizer. The enabling legislation, HB797 (2012),[194] established the State Charter Schools Commission (SCSC) that is administratively attached to the SBE. It defined its duties and powers in regard to charter schools, which include developing and disseminating best practices and accountability standards, presenting an annual report to the SBE on academic and financial performance, and making information available to parents. HB797 also established a new funding formula, allowing Virtual State Charter Schools[195] to receive the same per-pupil base funding as brick-and-mortar schools per the Quality Basic Education (QBE) funding formula, plus supplemental funding at two-thirds the level available to brick-and-mortar charter schools. The supplemental funding offered to State Charter Schools is not available to any other entity, including locally approved charter schools. Per-pupil base funding for fully online students is $4,779 for SY 2014–15.[196]

HB175 (2012)[197] created Georgia's Online Clearinghouse, directed by the state department of education, through which school systems and charter schools may offer online options to out-of-district students. The clearinghouse redirects students to providers based on ZIP code, prioritized by the student's resident district online program; it lists 11 online providers including GAVS, public school districts, and Virtual State Charters that have received regional accreditation. Criteria for approving additional providers were not established as of August 2014.

An executive order (2012)[198] from the governor created the Digital Learning Task Force; its December 2013 report focused on three categories: digital content and courses, blended and competency-based learning, and technology infrastructure.

Enrollment in the three statewide fully online schools increased 34% in SY 2013–14 over SY 2012–13. The Georgia Cyber Academy served 13,300 enrollments in grades K–12, Georgia Connections Academy served 2,994 students in grades K–12, and Provost Academy Georgia served 1,741 students in grades 9–12.[199]

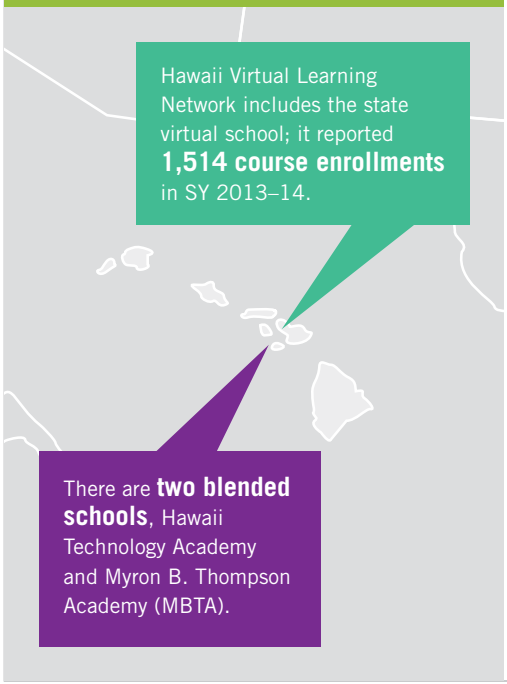
Gwinnett Online Campus (GOC) was granted charter authorization in 2011, allowing it to offer fully online options and supplemental courses for GOC students. In SY 2013–14, GOC served 350 fully online students and about 5,000 supplemental enrollments, nearly half of which were in summer school. Cobb Virtual Academy served 2,691 unique students and 4,295 course enrollments in SY 2013–14. Forsyth County Schools' iAchieve Virtual Academy also offers a fully online program for county residents; it accepts out-of-district students for tuition. Twiggs County Virtual School is a fully online school that serves students in grades K–12 in nine districts, but it does not operate statewide and is not chartered by the SCSC. Fulton, DeKalb, and Henry Counties also have online programs listed in Georgia's Online Clearinghouse.

GAVS was created by legislation in 2005; it served 33,041 course enrollments in SY 2013–14, a 28% increase over the previous year. GAVS also provides more than 70 online courses as open educational resources at no cost to Georgia districts, and is among the first state virtual schools to pilot an online option specifically to address college and career readiness for students. GAVS funding changed with SB289 (2012). GAVS invoices districts monthly, and districts pay GAVS $250 per student per online course. The GAVS annual line-item funding for operations increased from $1.5 million in SY 2013–14 to $3.1 million for SY 2014–15 to address provisions of SB289, including the development of online courses for grades 3–5; it expects total funding of about $7.5 million for SY 2014–15. A limited number of state-funded seats are offered to homeschooled and private students.

[194] HB797 (2012); retrieved June 24, 2014; http://www.legis.ga.gov/Legislation/20112012/127650.pdf
[195] State Charter Schools / Virtual State Charters are authorized by the State Charter School Commission. Districts may also authorize charter schools.
[196] State charter school funding; retrieved June 24, 2014; http://scsc.georgia.gov/funding
[197] HB175 (2012); retrieved June 24, 2014; http://www.legis.ga.gov/Legislation/20112012/127714.pdf
[198] Digital Learning Task Force Executive Order; retrieved June 24, 2014; https://gosa.georgia.gov/sites/gosa.georgia.gov/files/DLTF_Executive_Order.pdf and Final Report, https://gosa.georgia.gov/sites/gosa.georgia.gov/files/related_files/document/Task_Force_Final_Report_12.17.13.pdf
[199] Georgia DOE, Enrollment; retrieved June 24, 2014; http://app3.doe.k12.ga.us/ows-bin/owa/fte_pack_ethnicsex.entry_form. The enrollment numbers for the three Georgia virtual charter schools are based on reporting on October 1, 2013.

Hawaii

DIGITAL LEARNING STATE SNAPSHOT



Availability of online learning options

SUPPLEMENTAL			FULLY ONLINE		
K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)	K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)
NONE	SOME	MOST	NONE	NONE	NONE

Availability of info:
Great
Good
Fair
Poor
Minimal

Does this state have…

	Y	N
Student choice for publicly funded fully online schools?		n/a
Student choice for publicly funded supplemental online courses?		●
SVS or another publicly funded option for private / homeschool students?		●
Prior public school attendance requirement for online schools?		●
Online caps by class, school, district, or statewide?		●
PD requirement for online teachers?		●
State approval process for online providers?		●
State approval process for online courses?		●
Online learning requirement for students?		●
End-of-course exams?		●
Separate state reporting of online course enrollments?		●

Hawaii is one district.

eSchool has class caps.

eSchool has a PD requirement.

Hawaii has several statewide online programs, including the Hawaii Virtual Learning Network's (HVLN) partners, the E-School and Myron B. Thompson Academy, and the Hawaii Technology Academy charter school. As the state of Hawaii is one school district, these few blended and supplemental programs give all high school students in the state access to some digital learning options. In 2013, the legislature funded $8 million toward a one-to-one initiative for eight pilot schools to receive a digital tablet and laptop for every student and teacher. All schools received professional development on integrating technology into the classroom. A report was submitted July 2014 that reviews the first year of the pilot program, providing an overview of how the laptops were used in the classroom, what challenges the schools faced, and how the program can be improved.[200]

HB2971 SD2 (2008)[201] created HVLN to expand and systematize supplemental online course offerings. To accomplish this, HVLN:

- Established criteria to evaluate and approve online courses, and offers training to teachers in online instruction.
- Provides centralized support services to online students.
- Established partnerships with institutes of higher education, private schools, charter schools, state virtual schools, and commercial vendors.[202]

[200] The Impact of Hawaii's Access Learning Program; retrieved July 17, 2014; http://www.hawaiipublicschools.org/DOE%20Forms/Access%20Learning/AccessLearningYear1.pdf
[201] HB 2971 (2008); retrieved July 17, 2014; http://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/session2008/bills/HB2971_sd2_.htm
[202] Hawaii Virtual Learning Network; retrieved July 17, 2014; http://hawaiivln.k12.hi.us/

HVLN reported 1,514 enrollments in grades 7–12 in SY 2013–14, a slight decrease from the previous year. 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.

Myron B. Thompson Academy is a blended charter school that serves about 550 full-time students statewide. Students take some courses face-to-face at the onsite location and other courses mostly online with some face-to-face requirements. The face-to-face requirements are unique to each island. The Thompson Academy created the Thompson Extension Academy (TEA) program to offer supplemental online courses as an HVLN partner. TEA reported 200 additional course enrollments in SY 2013–14, a decrease of 33%[203] from SY 2012–13, following a 63% decrease from SY 2011–12.

Hawaii Technology Academy (HTA) is a blended learning charter school for students in grades K–12. HTA is entering its seventh year and reported 1,300 students in SY 2013–14. HTA offers its program to students on Oahu, Kauai, Maui, Molokai, Lanai, and the Big Island. Kamehameha Schools Distance Learning is a private K–12 school that partners with HVLN and offers distance learning courses for high school students nationwide. In SY 2013–14, it enrolled 189 students in fully online courses with a focus on Hawaiian culture through its ‘Ike Hawaii Distance Learning Program.[204]

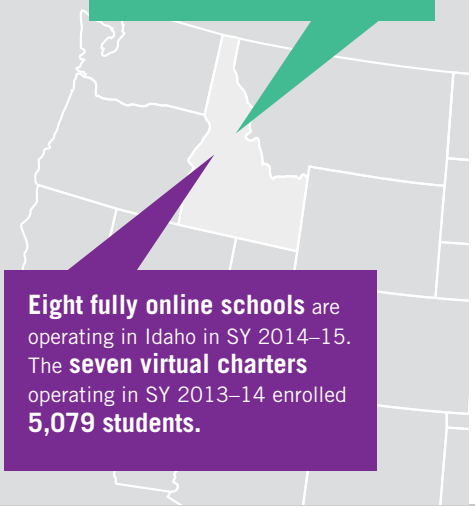
State policies did not change significantly from 2011 through 2014 and are available at www.kpk12.com/states/.

[203] Thompson Extension Academy enrollment numbers are low due to a recent school redesign.
[204] Kamehameha Schools Distance Learning; retrieved July 17, 2014; http://ksdl.ksbe.edu/ikehawaii

Idaho

DIGITAL LEARNING STATE SNAPSHOT

Idaho Digital Learning Academy is one of the larger state virtual schools with **20,820 course enrollments** in SY 2013–14.



Eight fully online schools are operating in Idaho in SY 2014–15. The **seven virtual charters** operating in SY 2013–14 enrolled **5,079 students.**

Availability of online learning options

SUPPLEMENTAL			FULLY ONLINE		
K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)	K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)
NONE	SOME	MOST	ALL	ALL	ALL

Availability of info: **Great** / Good / Fair / Poor / Minimal

Does this state have…

	Y	N
Student choice for publicly funded fully online schools?	●	
Student choice for publicly funded supplemental online courses?		●
SVS or another publicly funded option for private / homeschool students?	●	
Prior public school attendance requirement for online schools?		●
Online caps by class, school, district, or statewide?		●
PD requirement for online teachers?		●
State approval process for online providers?	●	
State approval process for online courses?	●	
Online learning requirement for students?		●
End-of-course exams?		●
Separate state reporting of online course enrollments?	●	

8 fully online schools in SY 2014–15.

As of 2013 for courses and providers. Existing providers were exempt.

7,372 district online enrollments in addition to IDLA enrollments.

Idaho has one of the largest state virtual schools (the Idaho Digital Learning Academy), a number of fully online schools, district programs, and a state distance education academy.[205] The Idaho Digital Learning Academy (IDLA) served 20,820 course enrollments in SY 2013–14, a 9% increase from SY 2012–13. Seven virtual charter schools enrolled 5,079 students in SY 2013–14, a 3% decrease from the previous year. One new virtual charter school opened in fall 2014. There are some district online programs, including the Meridian, Bonneville, Vallivue, Emmett, and Coeur d'Alene school districts.

State policies

SB1184 and several other laws that passed in 2011 emphasized a technology-driven education agenda advanced by the superintendent of public instruction. After the laws passed, opponents gathered enough signatures to place a referendum on the November 2012 state ballot, and the laws were repealed. For additional details, please see www.kpk12.com/states.

With SB1184, IDLA funding decreased with the elimination of its state appropriation, however, with the repeal of the law, IDLA's appropriation was restored. SB1091[206] (2013) re-established IDLA's state appropriation, albeit with a simplified version of IDLA's original funding formula. IDLA receives a base amount of $1.38 million for operations for SY 2014–15, plus a variable amount based on fixed funding

[205] Idaho Public Charter Schools, see "Other" tab; retrieved June 11, 2014; http://www.sde.idaho.gov/site/charter_schools/regions.htm. Idaho Distance Education Academy is similar to a virtual charter but is classified as a distance education academy.
[206] SB1091 (2013); retrieved July 8, 2014; http://www.legislature.idaho.gov/legislation/2013/S1091Bookmark.htm

per online course ($221 per course) multiplied by a projection of 22,500 course enrollments for SY 2014–15. IDLA's total budget for SY 2014–15 is about $7.5 million.

SB1091 (2013; ID Code 33-1024)[207] appropriated funds for the development and maintenance of an online course portal to include courses from IDLA, school districts, charter schools, and postsecondary institutions.[208] The portal launched in 2014 and incorporates customer ratings, and notification and communications capabilities. SB1091 (ID Code 08.02.03.128) also requires the State Department of Education (SDE) to develop and administer the review and approval of online course providers and courses;[209] however, Idaho public school districts, public charter schools, institutions of higher education, education management organizations, or consortia—including IDLA—are automatically approved to provide online courses.

SB1028 (2013) revised Idaho SDE rule[210] to remove "pilot" status around an initiative, Mastery Advancement Program (MAP), that allows students to earn credit by demonstrating mastery of a subject instead of only being allowed to earn credit through seat time, and to "successfully proceed through school curriculum at their own pace."[211] Standards are to be defined and approved by the local school district or local education agency by submitting an application to participate in the mastery advancement program to the SBE. At least 13 schools and districts participated in MAP in SY 2013–14.[212]

HB221 (2013)[213] revised new virtual charter school petitions and prohibited a local school district board of trustees from authorizing a new public virtual school charter. The law defines a virtual school as one "that delivers a full-time, sequential program of synchronous and/or asynchronous instruction primarily through the use of technology via the Internet in a distributed environment … and must have an online component to their school with online lessons and tools for student and data management."

Digital programs

There are eight fully online schools serving students in Idaho in SY 2014–15, including one new virtual charter school. Seven virtual charter schools enrolled 5,079 students in 2013–14, 3% less than in SY 2012–13. Idaho uses the same funding formula for virtual and brick-and-mortar charter schools. Qualifying virtual charters receive transportation funding[214] and all are eligible for facilities funding.

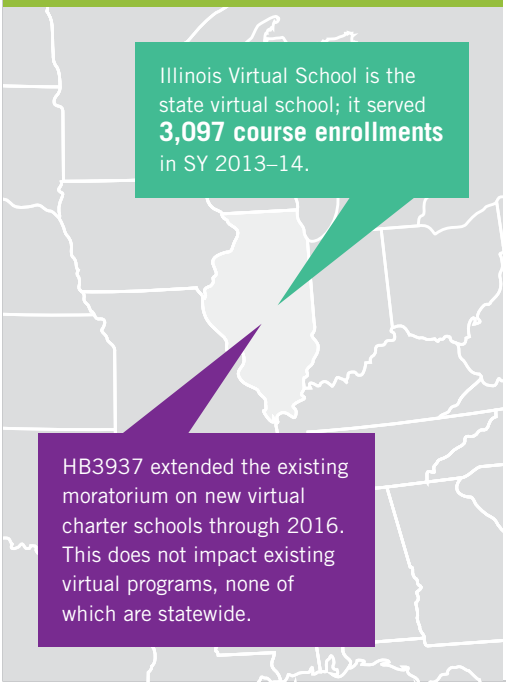
During SY 2013–14, IDLA launched iPath, a career and college readiness program that provides online courses to help students earn early degrees or college credits in computer science, business, and health care. The program includes practical experience through mentorships and internships. IDLA also worked with the state board of education to create the Transfer Portal,[215] which allows students to view all online and traditional dual credit, Advanced Placement, and postsecondary courses completed, and verify the transferability from institution to institution.

IDLA provides blended learning services to 44 of 115 Idaho districts. Districts are using IDLA online content, the learning management system, and professional development with 275 teachers and over 5,000 students participating in blended environments, including one district's creation of a grade 5–12 math mastery program.

[207] Idaho Code 33-1024; retrieved July 9, 2014; http://legislature.idaho.gov/idstat/Title33/T33CH10SECT33-1024.htm
[208] MyIdahoCourses; retrieved July 8, 2014; https://www.myidahocourses.org/
[209] Online course and provider quality requirements; retrieved July 8, 2014; http://www.sde.idaho.gov/site/digitalLearning/qualityRequirements.htm
[210] Idaho statutes; retrieved July 8, 2014; http://www.legislature.idaho.gov/idstat/Title33/T33CH16SECT33-1620.htm
[211] IDAPA 08.02.03.105 Rules Governing Thoroughness; retrieved July 8, 2014; http://www.sde.idaho.gov/site/forms/publicComments/2013/Proposed%20Fee%20Rule%20-%20IDAPA%2008.02.03.128,%20Curricular%20Materials%20Selection%20and%20Online.pdf
[212] Mastery Advancement Program; retrieved July 16, 2014; http://www.sde.idaho.gov/site/map/docs/MAP%202013%20Participating%20Districts-Schools.pdf
[213] HB221 (2013); retrieved July 3, 2014; http://www.legislature.idaho.gov/legislation/2013/H0221.pdf
[214] Idaho Code 33-1006(6); retrieved July 17, 2014; http://legislature.idaho.gov/idstat/Title33/T33CH10SECT33-1006.htm. Virtual charters use transportation funding to provide Internet access, computers and related equipment, toll-free telephone service, education related face-to-face visits, and actual pupil transportation costs.
[215] Idtransfer.org; retrieved July 17, 2014; http://idtransfer.org

Illinois

DIGITAL LEARNING STATE SNAPSHOT



Availability of online learning options

SUPPLEMENTAL			FULLY ONLINE		
K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)	K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)
NONE	SOME	SOME	NONE	NONE	NONE

Availability of info: Great **Good** Fair Poor Minimal

Does this state have…	Y	N
Student choice for publicly funded fully online schools?		●
Student choice for publicly funded supplemental online courses?		●
SVS or another publicly funded option for private / homeschool students?		●
Prior public school attendance requirement for online schools?		●
Online caps by class, school, district, or statewide?		●
PD requirement for online teachers?		●
State approval process for online providers?		●
State approval process for online courses?		●
Online learning requirement for students?		●
End-of-course exams?		●
Separate state reporting of online course enrollments?		●

IVS provided teacher professional development online to 606 Illinois teachers in SY 2013–14.

Illinois has a state virtual school (the Illinois Virtual School, IVS), several district-level online and blended schools, and a consortium of suburban Chicago districts offering online courses. There are no statewide fully online schools. In 2013, HB494 amended the Charter Schools Law of the School Code to establish a one-year moratorium on charter schools with "virtual-schooling components." HB3937 (2014)[216] extends the ban through December 31, 2016.

HB494 also required the state charter school commission to submit a report to the general assembly on the effect of creating virtual charter schools. The Report and Recommendations Regarding Virtual Schooling in Illinois[217] was released in February 2014; it recommends the extension of the moratorium, as well as:

- Defining a virtual school with a distinction between virtual and blended learning based on contact hours.
- Funding virtual charter schools through the general state aid formula, and basing funding upon a successful course or program completion with evidence of engagement, not only on enrollment.
- The general assembly should provide funding to develop and administer new rules governing virtual charter schools and the collection of data on virtual school performance.
- Modifying existing rules to require an authorizer to solicit proposals for a virtual charter school through an RFP process, base per-pupil funding on student success, and provide evidence of student engagement. It also recommends authorizers require proof the school can provide adequate services

[216] HB3937 (Public Act 098-1059); retrieved June 5, 2014; http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/publicacts/fulltext.asp?Name=098-1059. The moratorium does not apply to a charter school with virtual-schooling components existing or approved prior to April 1, 2013.
[217] Illinois State Charter School Commission, Report and Recommendations Regarding Virtual Schooling in Illinois; retrieved June 10, 2014; http://www.isbe.state.il.us/SCSC/pdf/vsag-final-report.pdf

for special needs and ELL students, and establish accountability standards based on state tests and "other measures appropriate for virtual schools."

Much of the virtual charter school activity appears to stem from the proposed Illinois Virtual Charter School @ Fox River Valley (IVCS@FRV), which approached 18 school districts in 2013 to approve and participate in a new virtual charter school for their students. The school would have been governed by a nonprofit group, Virtual Learning Solutions (VLS), and managed by K12 Inc. All 18 school districts rejected the IVCS@FRV proposal. VLS then filed 18 separate appeals (one for each district) to the state charter school commission. While the appeals were pending, the original one-year moratorium (HB494[218]) was signed into law, and the appeals were withdrawn.

Illinois Virtual School (IVS) served 3,097 course enrollments in SY 2013–14, a 3% increase over the previous year. It is funded via state appropriation and course enrollment fees, which range from $75 for a one-semester credit recovery course to $250 for a one-semester core or elective courses. The IVS appropriation for SY 2014–15 is $1.2 million, a 17% reduction from the previous year. IVS is the online provider for original credit online courses for the Chicago Public Schools.[219] IVS launched blended learning services in 2013 that provide courses and learning management system support for districts that want to use local teachers.

Virtual Opportunities Inside a School Environment (VOISE) Academy is a blended learning school in Chicago with about 400 enrollments selected by lottery from across the city.[220] Intrinsic School is a CPS fully blended charter school that opened in SY 2013–14 with 178 students in 9th grade and is serving grades 7, 9, and 10 in SY 2014–15; it is funded in part by a Next Generation Learning Challenges grant.

K12 Inc. provides curriculum and services for three Chicago-area charter schools with significant virtual components. The schools must get written approval from each district they serve; none operate statewide. The Chicago Virtual Charter School (CVCS) requires students to meet at a physical location once a week, which addresses a legal provision that charter schools not be home-based.[221] CVCS enrolled 686 students in SY 2013–14, a 15.5% increase over SY 2012–13. Youth Connection Charter School Virtual High School is a Chicago public school serving students ages 18–21 (grades 9–12) who have dropped out of high school; it enrolled about 90 students in SY 2013–14. 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 fully online school that has served K–12 students statewide since 2011; to serve out-of-district students it must have written agreements in place with each student's district of residence.

A new online learning consortium, Expanded Learning Opportunities, was formed by three suburban Chicago school districts—Indian Prairie, Naperville, and Wheaton Warrenville—to share online course content, teachers, and a learning management system across nine courses in SY 2014–15.

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.[222] The law required the program be delivered in a classroom or other traditional school setting, and on days the district is in attendance during the regular school year. In 2011, HB3223 (Public Act 97-0339)[223] 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. A district must create board policy and a remote education plan and submit them to the state board of education. Participating students remain enrolled in the local school attendance center and are required to participate in local and state assessments.

[218] HB494; retrieved June 10, 2014; http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/publicacts/98/PDF/098-0016.pdf
[219] Chicago Public School course enrollments through IVS are included in the IVS total enrollment of 3,097.
[220] Students who live within the neighborhood receive preference for enrollment in VOISE. CPS School Profile; retrieved July 7, 2014; http://www.cps.edu/Schools/Pages/school.aspx?SchoolId=610518
[221] See www.kpk12.com/states/ for a history of the lawsuit by the Chicago Teachers Union claiming that CVCS was not a legal charter school because Illinois law indicates that charter schools may not be home-based.
[222] HB2448; retrieved June 18, 2014; http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/publicacts/96/PDF/096-0684.pdf
[223] HB3223; retrieved June 18, 2014; http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/97/HB/PDF/09700HB3223lv.pdf

Indiana

DIGITAL LEARNING STATE SNAPSHOT

There were **7,603 students enrolled in five fully online schools** in SY 2013–14. Supplemental online **course enrollments** through a variety of providers totaled **at least 18,000** in SY 2013–14.

Indiana DOE's Office of eLearning supports digital learning by providing online content, PD, and LMS support to promote district content development collaboration.

Availability of online learning options

SUPPLEMENTAL			FULLY ONLINE		
K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)	K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)
NONE	NONE	SOME	ALL	ALL	ALL

Availability of info:
Great
Good
Fair
Poor
Minimal

Does this state have…

	Y	N
Student choice for publicly funded fully online schools?	●	
Student choice for publicly funded supplemental online courses?		●
SVS or another publicly funded option for private / homeschool students?		●
Prior public school attendance requirement for online schools?	●	
Online caps by class, school, district, or statewide?		●
PD requirement for online teachers?		●
State approval process for online providers?		●
State approval process for online courses?		●
Online learning requirement for students?		●
End-of-course exams?	●	
Separate state reporting of online course enrollments?		●

60% of virtual charter students statewide must have been enrolled in public schools during prior year.

Optional state-funded Intro to Blended and Online Teaching course available statewide.

In 3 subjects.

Indiana has expanded digital learning options for its students significantly in recent years, with fully online schools, blended schools, and supplemental programs. In SY 2013–14 there were 7,603 students enrolled in five fully online schools,[224] a 13% increase over the previous year. There are a number of educational service centers, districts, and institutions providing at least 18,000 supplemental course enrollments in SY 2013–14. There are at least four blended charter schools and several district blended learning programs.

HB1002 (2011)[225] ended the pilot status of a virtual school program and set virtual charter funding at 85% of base ADM, which is 90% of the per-pupil funding received by brick-and-mortar charter schools. Virtual charter schools are also entitled to receive special education and other state grants at the same level as traditional brick-and-mortar schools.[226] The same funding formula applies to blended charter schools if more than 50% of instruction is delivered via "virtual distance learning, online technologies, or computer based instruction."[227] HB1002 also established that at least 60% of virtual charter students must have been included in the state ADM count the previous year.

The state office of eLearning offers resources to educators, including digital content, professional development, and free learning management system support to promote district content development collaboration (with a focus on blended learning). A directory highlights the work of 23 school districts awarded Classroom Innovation Grants (2012) for supporting student learning through the use of technology, most with an emphasis on blended learning. The Flex Pilot Program allowed six school districts to try

[224] Personal communication with Indiana department of education, July 8, 2014
[225] HB1002 (2011); retrieved July 9, 2014; http://www.in.gov/apps/lsa/session/billwatch/billinfo?year=2011&request=getBill&docno=1002
[226] Indiana Code 20-43-7-1; retrieved July 8, 2014; https://iga.in.gov/legislative/laws/2014/ic/titles/020/articles/043/
[227] Indiana Code 20-24-7-13; retrieved July 8, 2014; https://iga.in.gov/legislative/laws/2014/ic/titles/020/articles/024/

innovative approaches to school schedules by leveraging eLearning options in SY 2013–14. The office of eLearning is also proving select districts with Innovation Planning Grants to develop a comprehensive plan to implement 1:1 programs with digital curriculum.

Digital programs

Enrollment in fully online schools has increased consistently in the wake of HB1002. The largest of these is Hoosier Academies, with 4,151 fully online students in SY 2013–14. An outgrowth of the original pilot program, it is now two K12 Inc. academies, one online and one fully blended. Indiana Connections Academy served 3,013 students in grades K–12 in SY 2013–14. Indiana Virtual School is authorized by Daleville Community Schools and managed by Pearson and Florida Virtual School. It served 105 students in grades 6–12 in SY 2013–14, and accepts supplemental course enrollments on a tuition basis. Indiana Cyber Charter School served about 200 K–12 enrollments in SY 2013–14.

There are eight charter school authorizers in Indiana and any may authorize a virtual or blended charter school.[228]

A diverse range of tuition and fee-based programs offer supplemental online courses to students statewide. Many of these programs are offered by consortia, with prices on a sliding scale depending on where the student lives. Providers include:

- The Indiana Online Academy, a program of the Central Indiana Educational Service Center, served about 250 schools from across the state in SY 2013–14 with 13,722 course enrollments, the majority of which are summer school enrollments. Courses cost $275 for public school students and $295 for private and homeschooled students.
- The Indiana Virtual Academy served 2,994 course enrollments in SY 2013–14, a 23% decrease largely in summer school enrollments. Courses cost $190 to residents of Ripley County, and $295 to all others. Costs are discounted for partner schools and blended learning applications.[229]
- Achieve Virtual Education Academy, part of the Metropolitan School District of Wayne Township, is an online high school that accepts students from across the state. Achieve Virtual served 134 fully online students and about 300 supplemental course enrollments in SY 2013–14.[230]
- Indiana University High School is a diploma-granting distance program providing tuition-based supplemental courses and a fully online program to students worldwide (and often deployed overseas). Administered by the Indiana University, the program served about 1,950 students in SY 2013–14, 600 of which were Indiana residents. Tuition and fees average about $293.

In addition to Hoosier Academy, at least four other fully blended schools operated in SY 2013–14: Nexus Academy of Indianapolis (grades 9–12), Enlace Academy (grades K–3), George and Veronica Phalen Leadership Academy #1 (grades K–8), and Carpe Diem Collegiate High School with about 80 students in SY 2013–14. Two new Carpe Diem schools have been approved by the Indiana Charter School Board, both in Indianapolis, with one scheduled to open in SY 2015–16.

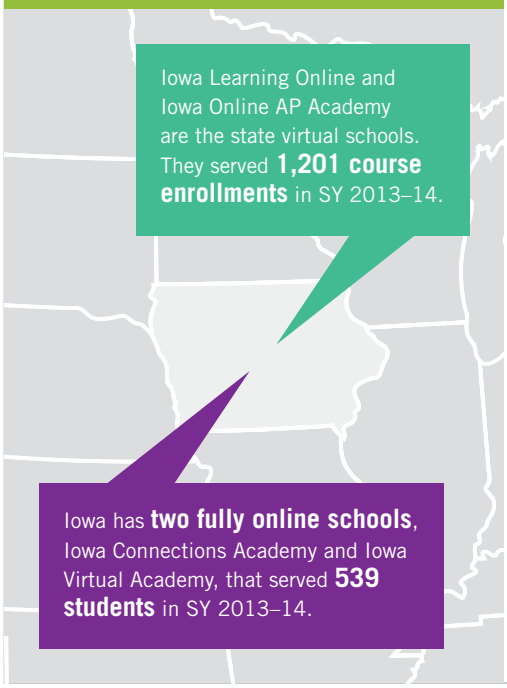
Crown Point Community School Corporation is in the third year of a seven-year phased roll-out of blended courses; all 9th–12th grade students are learning in a blended environment for SY 2014–15. Center Grove Community School Corporation offers an online "Global Campus." The River Forest Virtual Academy opened in 2014 serving resident students and those within 30 miles of the school.

Further details about previous legislation, along with two 2009 reports on the state of virtual learning in Indiana, are available in *Keeping Pace 2013* and at www.kpk12.com/states.

[228] Indiana Department of Education; retrieved July 16, 2014; http://www.doe.in.gov/student-services/charter-schools/indiana-charter-school-authorizers
[229] Course info; retrieved July 2, 2013; http://www.indva.com/course-info/#cost
[230] Personal communication with Achieve Virtual Education Academy; additional information retrieved July 9, 2014; https://www.wayne.k12.in.us/virtualacademy/

Iowa

DIGITAL LEARNING STATE SNAPSHOT



Availability of online learning options

SUPPLEMENTAL			FULLY ONLINE		
K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)	K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)
NONE	NONE	SOME	SOME	SOME	SOME

Availability of info: **Great** Good Fair Poor Minimal

Does this state have…

	Y	N
Student choice for publicly funded fully online schools?	●	
Student choice for publicly funded supplemental online courses?		●
SVS or another publicly funded option for private / homeschool students?	●	
Prior public school attendance requirement for online schools?		●
Online caps by class, school, district, or statewide?	●	
PD requirement for online teachers?		●
State approval process for online providers?		●
State approval process for online courses?		●
Online learning requirement for students?		●
End-of-course exams?		●
Separate state reporting of online course enrollments?		●

Accredited non-public school students and dually enrolled homeschooled students may enroll in Iowa Learning Online courses.

.018% (approximately 900) student cap statewide for full-time schools; no more than 1% from any one district.

Iowa has two partnering supplemental statewide online programs (Iowa Learning Online and Iowa Online AP Academy), increasing district-level online learning activity, one community college offering high school credit recovery, and two fully online schools. In SY 2013–14, the state counted 539 full-time students and 1,201 supplemental course enrollments.

State policies

House File 215[231] (2013) provided funding and additional details for legislation passed in 2011 and 2012. It accomplished the following:

- Appropriated $1.5 million annually for two years for the administration and expansion of the Iowa Online Learning (IOL) initiative. The funding also provided professional development for IOL teachers.
- Established a competency-based learning task force and awarded an annual grant to 10 districts to pilot a competency-based learning program.[232]
- Stated that beginning with SY 2016–17, all students in grades 3–11 will take annual assessments that measure student achievement and growth. A task force has been created that will make recommendations on statewide student assessments that are aligned with the Iowa Core, and that are valid, reliable, and piloted in Iowa. It also will review the costs the assessments will impose on districts and states, including the technical support needed, and report its findings by January 1, 2015.

[231] House File 215 (2013); retrieved July 1, 2014; https://coolice.legis.iowa.gov/linc/85/external/HF215_Enrolled.html
[232] Competency based district pilots; retrieved July 19, 2014; https://www.educateiowa.gov/pk-12/standards-and-curriculum/competency-based-pathways/iowa-cbe-collaborative

House File 645 (2011)[233] and Senate File 2284 (2012)[234]:

- Codified Iowa Learning Online (ILO), the department of education's (IDOE) virtual school initiative. It is the only online program allowed to help districts fulfill the Iowa Code Chapter 272 "offer and teach" requirements. Districts are prevented from contracting with private providers for "offer and teach" courses.
- Established ILO as the Online Learning Program Model. This is repealed as of July 1, 2015, making it equivalent to a three-year pilot.
- Stated that the IDOE would 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."
- Limited the statewide enrollment of pupils in educational online instruction to not more than .018% of the statewide K–12 enrollments (about 900 students) and limited 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.
- Mandated that ILO teachers must have completed "an online learning for Iowa educators professional development project offered by area education agencies, a teacher preservice program, or comparable coursework."

Online programs

ILO, run by the IDOE, offers a variety of synchronous and asynchronous Internet, video-based, and blended courses. ILO started in summer 2004 and offers courses in grades 9–12 (students in grades 8–12) with set start / end dates and accommodations for students needing slower or faster pacing. ILO served 545 course enrollments in SY 2013–14, a 13% decrease from the previous year. 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.

The Iowa Online AP Academy (IOAPA) reported 656 course enrollments in SY 2013–14, a 9% increase. The program received an appropriation of $481,849 for SY 2013–14. 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.[235]

Iowa has two fully online schools that opened in 2012. The Iowa Connections Academy served 341 students in grades K–12, and Iowa Virtual Academy served 198 students[236] in grades K–6 in SY 2013–14. This represents a 78% annual increase in statewide fully online enrollments.

Kirkwood High School Distance Learning is a program of Kirkwood Community College that works with school districts across Iowa to offer online transfer credit courses to students looking for credit recovery opportunities; it charges $150 per Iowa student per course. Kirkwood served 1,144 course enrollments in SY 2013–14, a 35% increase from SY 2012–13.

[233] House File 645 (2011), Section 18; retrieved July 1, 2014; http://coolice.legis.iowa.gov/Cool-ICE/default.asp?Category=BillInfo&Service=Billbook&menu=text&ga=84&hbill=HF645

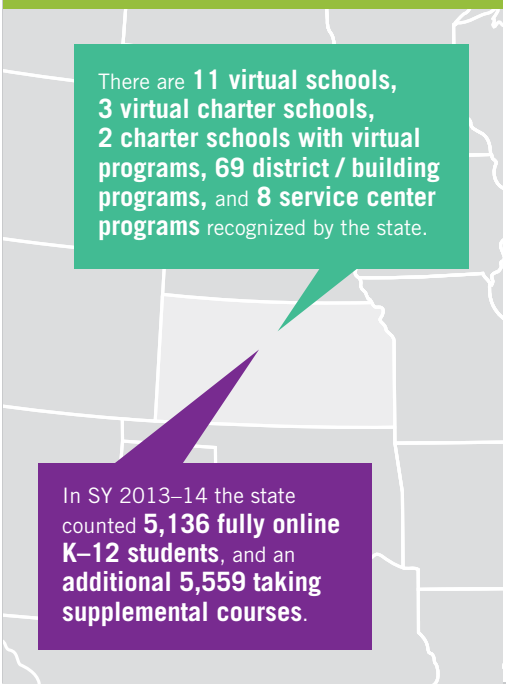
[234] Senate File 2284 Division IV (2012); retrieved July 1, 2014; http://coolice.legis.iowa.gov/Cool-ICE/default.asp?Category=BillInfo&Service=Billbook&menu=text&ga=84&hbill=SF2284

[235] I.C.A. 257.11; retrieved July 1, 2014; http://coolice.legis.state.ia.us/Cool-ICE/default.asp?Category=billinfo&Service=IowaCode&input=257.11

[236] Iowa Virtual Academy enrollment numbers; retrieved August 4, 2014; https://www.educateiowa.gov/documents/public-buildings-public/2014/01/2013-2014-iowa-public-school-building-prek-12-enrollments

Kansas

DIGITAL LEARNING STATE SNAPSHOT



Availability of online learning options

SUPPLEMENTAL			FULLY ONLINE		
K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)	K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)
SOME	MOST	MOST	MOST	MOST	MOST

Availability of info: **Great** / Good / Fair / Poor / Minimal

Does this state have…

	Y	N
Student choice for publicly funded fully online schools?	●	
Student choice for publicly funded supplemental online courses?	●	
SVS or another publicly funded option for private / homeschool students?		●
Prior public school attendance requirement for online schools?		●
Online caps by class, school, district, or statewide?		●
PD requirement for online teachers?	●	
State approval process for online providers?	●	
State approval process for online courses?		●
Online learning requirement for students?		●
End-of-course exams?		●
Separate state reporting of online course enrollments?	●	

Students may enroll in 1 of 47 programs that accept out-of-district students.

Multiple providers, but funding not guaranteed.

Districts must provide adequate training to teachers who teach in virtual schools, and confirm via annual report to state board.

KSDE approves virtual schools / programs.

Kansas has 93 digital programs approved by the Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE): 11 virtual schools, three virtual charter schools, two charter schools with virtual programs, 69 district / building programs, and eight service center programs that collectively cover all elementary through high school grade levels.[237] All schools and programs are approved for full-time enrollment.

In SY 2013–14, the state reported 5,136 full-time students and 5,559 part-time students, and a total of 6,552 FTEs. Part-time students were enrolled in either blended learning programs, advanced courses, credit recovery courses, or supplemental courses for homeschooled and private school students. About 37% of virtual education students study at the elementary school level, 23% at the middle school level, and 40% at the high school level. The number of full-time students increased by 447 since SY 2012–13, while the number of part-time students increased by 4,339. Online elementary and middle schools in small, rural communities often serve fewer than 100 students, with some exceptions, e.g.—the Lawrence Virtual School, the largest virtual school in the state, reported 1,351 FTE in SY 2013–14.

Any school or district may choose to provide supplemental online courses or contract with an existing virtual school or program for online courses, but they are not required to do so. During SY 2013–14, 47 of the 93 approved schools and programs accepted out-of-district students.

[237] Virtual School/Program List 2012–2013; retrieved June 19, 2014; http://www.ksde.org/Portals/0/TLA/Graduation%20and%20School%20Choice/Virtual/2013-2014_Virtual_Schools_and_Programs.pdf

State policies

The KSDE has had a comprehensive set of policies for online schools and programs, including extensive reporting, since enacting its Virtual School Act, KSA 2009 (2008).[238] The act increased supervision and regulation of all virtual schools by KSDE. All virtual schools / programs are audited annually. Extensive documentation is available on the KSDE website, including an explanation of Virtual Education Requirements.[239]

State law permits districts to make agreements for inter-district attendance for supplemental online courses.

Funding

The Virtual School Act altered the funding of online students such that all full-time virtual students are funded at 1.05 (105%) of base FTE. The base state aid per pupil in SY 2013–14 was $3,838; full-time virtual students received $4,030. A number of other factors may impact funding:

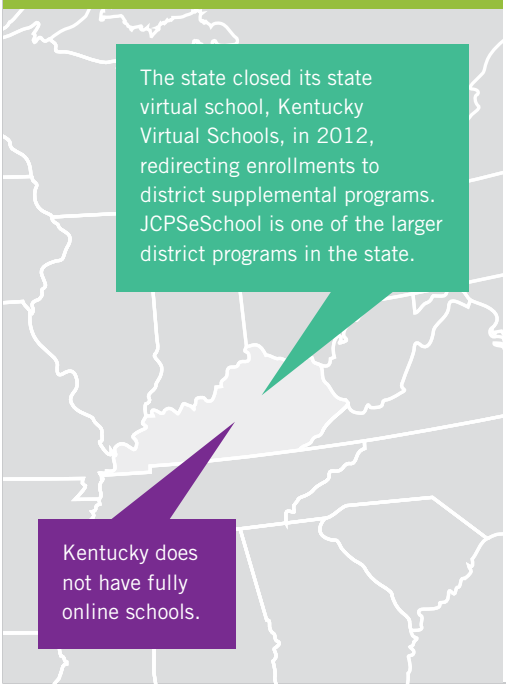
- Virtual students were eligible for two weightings: non-proficient at-risk weighting and advanced placement weighting. In SY 2014–15, there is no longer non-proficient at-risk weighting available to virtual students.
  - The number of virtual students who tested non-proficient in the previous year and do not qualify as free for at-risk purposes is multiplied by .25 rounded to one decimal place.
  - The total number of students who qualify for the weighting is multiplied by .08 rounded to one decimal place. Advanced placement weighting is available for both semesters.
- As students may attend both a traditional school and a virtual school at the same time, funding levels may be affected by whether these schools are in the same or different districts.
  - Students who attend a district's virtual school as well as a local traditional school will be counted by the school at which they undertake the most coursework. If countable time is more than 50% virtual, the student will be counted as virtual for funding purposes.
  - When a student attends a traditional school in one district, but is also enrolled and attending a virtual school in a different district, the virtual school will compute minutes enrolled as they would for any other virtual student; however, they will be limited to the number of minutes remaining after the traditional school's minutes are subtracted from 360.

State policies did not change significantly from 2009–14; see www.kpk12.com/states.

[238] Virtual School Act Supp. 72-3711 through 72-3716; retrieved June 19, 2014; http://kansasstatutes.lesterama.org/Chapter_72/Article_37/
[239] Kansas State Department of Education Virtual School and Program information; retrieved June 19, 2014; http://www.ksde.org/Default.aspx?tabid=171

Kentucky

DIGITAL LEARNING STATE SNAPSHOT



Availability of online learning options

SUPPLEMENTAL			FULLY ONLINE		
K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)	K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)
NONE	NONE	SOME	NONE	NONE	NONE

Availability of info:
Great
Good
Fair
Poor
Minimal

Does this state have…	Y	N
Student choice for publicly funded fully online schools?		●
Student choice for publicly funded supplemental online courses?		●
SVS or another publicly funded option for private / homeschool students?		●
Prior public school attendance requirement for online schools?		●
Online caps by class, school, district, or statewide?		●
PD requirement for online teachers?		●
State approval process for online providers?		●
State approval process for online courses?		●
Online learning requirement for students?		●
End-of-course exams?	●	● *In 4 subjects.*
Separate state reporting of online course enrollments?		●

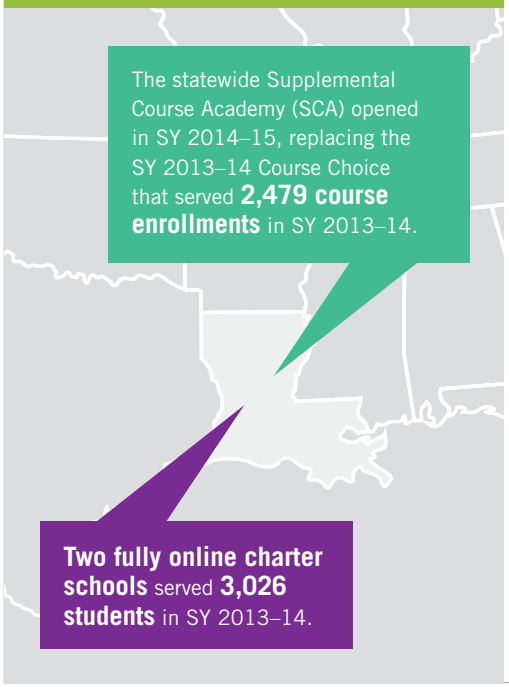
Kentucky has some district blended activity, and three supplemental and full-time online course providers that are part of the Kentucky Virtual Campus: JCPSeSchool, Barren Academy of Virtual and Expanded Learning (BAVEL), and Kentucky Education Television (KET). The Kentucky Virtual School, which was among the first state virtual schools, closed in 2012. Jefferson County's JCPSeSchool served 23,439 course enrollments to students in grades 6–12 (72% of which were in state) in a competency-based curriculum. BAVEL offers students in grades 6–12 a fully online learning program. Other virtual programs include KET, which offers courses to students at schools with limited access to electives.[240] In 2012 the department of education began implementing blended learning pilot programs in volunteer schools and districts as a result of recommendations in Digital Learning 2020: A Policy Report for Kentucky's Digital Future.[241] It offered professional development to Algebra 1 teachers as a part of the second year in implementing the Algebra 1 Blended Learning Pilot.[242]

Kentucky does not have inter-district choice, charter schools, or charter school legislation. However, HB37 (2012)[243] allowed districts of innovation to include virtual education hours in overall instructional time, and to establish virtual schools for delivering alternative classes to meet graduation requirements. Four applicants were approved in SY 2012–13, and three more in SY 2013–14. Dansville received a Next Generation Learning Challenges grant, and has implemented blended learning to all core middle and high school courses.

[240] The Kentucky Department of Education was unable to provide enrollment numbers before *Keeping Pace 2014* went to print.
[241] Digital Learning 2020: A Policy Report for Kentucky's Digital Future; retrieved August 13, 2013; http://education.ky.gov/school/innov/Documents/KY%20Digital%20Learning%20FINAL.pdf
[242] Algebra 1 Blended Learning Pilot, retrieved July 21, 2014; http://education.ky.gov/school/diglrn/Pages/Algebra-1-Blended-Learning.aspx
[243] HB37 (2012); retrieved July 21, 2014; http://www.lrc.ky.gov/record/12rs/HB37.htm

Louisiana

DIGITAL LEARNING STATE SNAPSHOT



Availability of online learning options

SUPPLEMENTAL			FULLY ONLINE		
K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)	K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)
NONE	SOME	MOST	MOST	MOST	MOST

Availability of info: Great **Good** Fair Poor Minimal

Does this state have…

	Y	N	
Student choice for publicly funded fully online schools?	●		*2 fully online statewide schools.*
Student choice for publicly funded supplemental online courses?	●		*Though with limited funding.*
SVS or another publicly funded option for private / homeschool students?		●	
Prior public school attendance requirement for online schools?		●	*Online charter schools have enrollment caps.*
Online caps by class, school, district, or statewide?	●		
PD requirement for online teachers?		●	
State approval process for online providers?		●	*Only to participate in SCA.*
State approval process for online courses?		●	
Online learning requirement for students?		●	
End-of-course exams?	●		*In 6 subjects.*
Separate state reporting of online course enrollments?		●	

Louisiana has two fully online charter schools, a number of district programs, and a statewide Supplemental Course Academy (formerly its Course Choice program). Blended schools are growing in popularity in New Orleans, which from SY 2014–15 is home to the country's first school district that consists primarily of charter schools (Recovery School District). From 2000 through 2013, Louisiana had a state virtual school, Louisiana Virtual School (LVS). In 2012, Act 2 (HB976) enacted sweeping reforms to public K–12 education, including initial implementation of the Course Choice program.[244]

Through Course Choice in SY 2013–14, students were permitted to select their own online, hybrid, and face-to-face course offerings from 21 authorized private and out-of-district providers, including commercial vendors, Louisiana community colleges, and school districts. Ongoing legal challenges to the program's funding model were raised, and the Louisiana Supreme Court found mid-2013 that the funding model was unconstitutional; as an interim measure, the department of education (LDOE) reallocated about $2 million in alternative funding for the SY 2013–14 pilot.

With SB179 (2014),[245] Course Choice has been replaced by the Supplemental Course Academy (SCA), through which high school courses from 44 providers are offered to grades 7–12 students statewide. Funding is now through the Minimum Foundation Program (MFP), provided as an incremental funding stream in addition to the regular public education funding formula. During the transition from LVS to Course Choice and now SCA, the number of student enrollments in supplemental courses (online and other) decreased by 61%,

[244] HB976 (Act 2); retrieved June 17, 2014; http://www.legis.la.gov/Legis/BillInfo.aspx?i=220608
[245] SB179 (Act 482); retrieved June 18, 2014; http://www.legis.la.gov/legis/ViewDocument.aspx?d=913666

from 6,414 in SY 2012–13 to 2,479 course enrollments in SY 2013–14.[246] A state-run Counselor Assistance Center supports parents, students, school counselors, and course providers implementing SCA programs.

Louisiana has two fully online charter schools, Louisiana Connections Academy (LACA) and Louisiana Virtual Charter Academy (LAVCA). LACA enrollment is capped at 1,800 students for SY 2014–15, an increase from 1,200 in SY 2013–14. For SY 2013–14, LACA enrolled 350 students in grades K–5, 385 students in grades 6–8, and 465 students in grades 9–12, the same distribution as in SY 2012–13.[247] LAVCA is available to Louisiana students in grades K–12; in SY 2013–14 it served 1,826 students, an increase of 2% over SY 2012–13.[248]

District programs operate in Vermilion, St. Mary, St. Martin, Lafourche, and St. Tammany parishes, among others, providing fully online and supplemental options to students. Typically, in-district students attend such schools for little or no tuition, and out-of-district students can enroll for tuition if there is space. One parish school system (St. James) and one parish technical center (Caddo Career & Technology Center) participated in SY 2013–14 as Course Choice providers.

State policies

Act 2 (2012) also amended the application process for charter schools and provided for a new type of board of elementary and secondary education (BESE)-certified chartering authority, "local charter authorizers," which may be a state agency, a nonprofit corporation, a Louisiana public postsecondary education institution, or a nonprofit corporation established by the governing authority of a parish or municipality.[249]

Act 772 (SB622, 2014) requires the LDOE to develop and implement a statewide educational technology plan, ensuring that "every public elementary and secondary school and classroom has the infrastructure and capacity necessary to provide a high-quality, digital instructional environment that maximizes the integration of technology into the classroom and enhances and improves student engagement and learning."[250] The superintendent of education must update the plan at least once a year to keep current with technological advances, and the LDOE must submit a written report to the Senate and House education committees by January 15 of each year regarding plan implementation and the status of technology readiness of each school and school system.

In 2013, the LDOE published updated state standards for distance education in Bulletin 741 (Louisiana Handbook for School Administrators);[251] some sections were specific to Course Choice and apply also to SCA. Per Bulletin 132,[252] BESE authorizes the operation and eligibility of providers to participate in SCA for three years, and will monitor and evaluate each by student achievement metrics—e.g., success on exams, logical course pathways, and proven assessment methods for all courses. Online course providers must follow the iNACOL course, teaching, and program standards.[253]

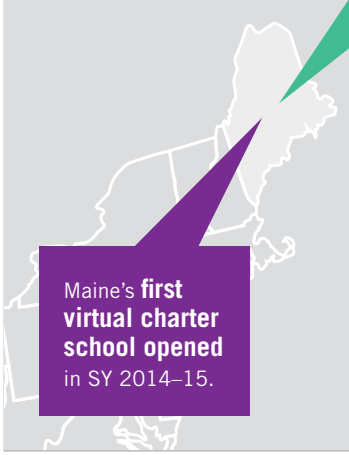
Districts, charter schools, and special schools receive $26 per grades 7–12 student for all students statewide (an estimated $7.5 million in SY 2014–15) to cover the cost of SCA courses. Districts and schools must commit at least 90% of their SCA funding by the close of fall registration or the balance of these funds is reallocated to other districts / schools.[254] The LDOE will make all course provider payments directly for districts and eligible schools that choose to execute cooperative endeavor agreements (CEAs) based on that of the former LVS; 50% of course costs are paid to the provider upon student enrollment, with the remaining 50% paid upon timely completion (though providers may still receive 40% if a student eventually completes and receives credit for the course).

[246] Personal communication with Deputy Superintendent, Louisiana Department of Education, July 19, 2014
[247] Personal communication with Glenda Jones, Assistant Principal, LACA, June 19, 2014
[248] The source for the LAVCA enrollments changed from 2013 to 2014, resulting in a significant increase in the total number of enrollments. Retrieved August 7, 2014; http://www.louisianabelieves.com/resources/library/data-center
[249] Bulletin 126 (Charter Schools); retrieved June 20, 2014; http://www.doa.louisiana.gov/osr/lac/28v139/28v139.doc
[250] SB622 (Act 722); retrieved July 14, 2014; http://www.legis.la.gov/Legis/ViewDocument.aspx?d=895301
[251] Bulletin 741 (Louisiana Handbook For School Administrators); retrieved June 17, 2014; http://www.doa.louisiana.gov/osr/lac/28v115/28v115.doc
[252] Bulletin 132 (Louisiana Course Choice Program); retrieved June 18, 2014; http://www.doa.louisiana.gov/osr/lac/28v151/28v151.doc
[253] iNACOL National Quality Standards; retrieved June 18, 2014; http://www.inacol.org/resources/publications/national-quality-standards/
[254] LDOE press release; retrieved August 25, 2014; http://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/default-source/course-choice/sca-fact-sheet-final.pdf?sfvrsn=2

Maine

DIGITAL LEARNING STATE SNAPSHOT

Maine Online Learning Program had **9 approved providers** that served an estimated **1,700 course enrollments** in SY 2013–14.



Maine's **first virtual charter school opened** in SY 2014–15.

Availability of online learning options

SUPPLEMENTAL			FULLY ONLINE		
K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)	K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)
NONE	NONE	SOME	NONE	NONE	NONE

Availability of info: **Great** / Good / Fair / Poor / Minimal

Does this state have…	Y	N
Student choice for publicly funded fully online schools?	●	
Student choice for publicly funded supplemental online courses?		●
SVS or another publicly funded option for private / homeschool students?		●
Prior public school attendance requirement for online schools?		●
Online caps by class, school, district, or statewide?	●	
PD requirement for online teachers?		●
State approval process for online providers?		●
State approval process for online courses?		●
Online learning requirement for students?		●
End-of-course exams?		●
Separate state reporting of online course enrollments?	●	

First virtual charter opened SY 2014–15.

Virtual charter capped at 297.

Maine DOE maintains a list of MOLP-approved providers, but school administrators need not select from this list.

Maine's first statewide online charter school, the Maine Connections Academy, began operations in SY 2014–15. Students enroll in supplemental online courses from a number of state-approved providers through the Maine Online Learning Program (MOLP). The Maine Learning Technology Initiative has provided one-to-one devices to 7th and 8th graders statewide since its inception in 2001.

Digital programs

In March 2014, the Maine Charter School Commission approved the Maine Connections Academy to begin serving students in grades 7–9 in SY 2014–15, and authorized it to eventually serve up to 750 students in grades 7–12 (initial student enrollment was capped at 297).[255] The Commission simultaneously rejected a proposal for the Maine Virtual Academy, a K12 Inc. school. Both schools' applications to operate had been rejected for SY 2013–14 (further historical information is available on the *Keeping Pace* website[256]). K12 Inc. has submitted a letter of intent to apply again for SY 2015–16. Three additional applicants for SY 2015–16 target students in grades K–8.

MOLP was established to provide high-quality educational options for students in grades K–12, through online learning programs and courses. MOLP maintains an approved list of providers for districts. As of August 2014, there were nine state-approved providers; nine providers served an estimated 1,700 course enrollments in SY 2013–14, an annual increase of 55%.

[255] Maine Connections Academy charter; retrieved July 26, 2014; http://www.maine.gov/csc/schools/MaineConnectionsAcademy.pdf
[256] *Keeping Pace*, First Statewide Fully Online School in Maine Will Move Forward, March 10, 2014; retrieved August 5, 2014; http://kpk12.com/blog/2014/03/first-statewide-fully-online-school-in-maine-will-move-forward/

Notable online programs in the state include:

- The Virtual High School (a MOLP-approved provider) with 48 member schools (18% of all middle and high schools) in Maine. VHS reported 950 course enrollments in SY 2013–14 (an annual increase of 40%).
- AP4ALL provides access to Advanced Placement® courses for all students statewide; it is managed by the Maine Department of Education (MDE). It reported 450 course enrollments in 22 courses for SY 2012–13.
- The University of Maine's Academ-e program offers online university courses to Maine 11th and 12th graders. 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%.

The Maine Learning Technology Initiative (MLTI) has been equipping all of the state's 7th and 8th grade students and teachers with one-to-one access to wireless devices since 2001 (laptops were supplemented by tablets in SY 2013–14). In SY 2013–14 MLTI provided equipment and support to 81 Maine high schools, 61% of the high schools in the state. The program has served approximately 200,000 students since its initiation.[257] Middle and high schools are provided wireless notebook computers for faculty and administrators through the program, along with wireless network infrastructure.[258] MLTI also offers professional development.

The MDE's Center for Best Practice profiles a number of Maine schools and districts which have taken steps toward implementing proficiency-based, learner-centered instructional systems (which often feature blended components).[259] Students at the Hall-Dale Middle School in Farmingdale, for example, use a laptop-based online learning dashboard to track classes, assignments, and progress towards learning standards.[260] The independent Maine Cohort for Customized Learning is a statewide coalition of advocates for performance-based education in Maine school systems.

State policies

SP0531 (2009)[261] required the MDE to report online education data annually 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. In practice this report is made available only when requested by the Education Committee (although data is collected).[262]

LD1553 (2011)[263] allowed charter schools in Maine for the first time (limited to 10 charter schools over 10 years, six of which have already been approved), and created the Maine Charter School Commission as the only entity that could authorize virtual charter schools. (Other types of authorizing entities are allowed in the law, and they can authorize charter schools that have an online component.) Policies outlined in the application process include requirements specific to virtual charter schools, including synchronous requirements for students and teachers.[264] LD1553 also has several quality assurance measures.

[257] Personal Communication, Learning Technology Policy Director, MDE, August 8, 2014
[258] Maine Learning Technology Initiative; retrieved July 26, 2014; http://www.maine.gov/mlte/
[259] Center for Best Practice; retrieved July 26, 2014; http://maine.gov/doe/cbp/
[260] Featured DOE video of Hall-Dale Middle School; retrieved July 26, 2014; http://maine.gov/doe/cbp/videos/hall-dale-middle.html
[261] Maine public law, Chapter 330; retrieved July 26, 2014; http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/bills/bills_124th/chappdfs/PUBLIC330.pdf
[262] Personal Communication, Learning Technology Policy Director, MDE, August 8, 2014
[263] LD1553; retrieved July 26, 2014; http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/bills/bills_125th/billtexts/SP049601.asp
[264] Maine Charter School Commission; retrieved July 26, 2014; http://www.maine.gov/csc/index.html

Maryland

DIGITAL LEARNING STATE SNAPSHOT

A state program provides MSDE-approved online courses and services to district programs that served about **4,817 course enrollments** in SY 2013–14. No fully online schools.

Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) provides online course review guidelines that districts and providers must meet. The MSDE must approve all online courses per SB674 (2012).

Availability of online learning options

SUPPLEMENTAL			FULLY ONLINE		
K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)	K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)
NONE	NONE	SOME	NONE	NONE	NONE

Availability of info: **Great** / Good / Fair / Poor / Minimal

Does this state have…

	Y	N
Student choice for publicly funded fully online schools?		●
Student choice for publicly funded supplemental online courses?		●
SVS or another publicly funded option for private / homeschool students?		●
Prior public school attendance requirement for online schools?		●
Online caps by class, school, district, or statewide?		●
PD requirement for online teachers?	●	
State approval process for online providers?		●
State approval process for online courses?	●	
Online learning requirement for students?		●
End-of-course exams?		●
Separate state reporting of online course enrollments?		●

Part of MSDE Process and Procedures in response to HB674.

Extensive review and approval process by MSDE paid for by providers.

MSDE offers online High School Assessment courses in four subject areas.

MSDE recommends districts report online enrollments.

The state program, Maryland Virtual Learning Opportunities (MVLO),[265] offers locally developed and vendor-provided online courses approved by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) to all 24 local school systems. Districts reported 4,817 course enrollments in these courses to the MSDE in SY 2013–14. Maryland does not have statewide fully online schools.

Maryland law (SB674, 2012)[266] requires the MSDE to develop standards for teachers and other school employees who offer online courses or services, to review courses and courseware to assure quality and alignment with content standards, and to purchase and develop Internet-based learning resources and courses for students and staff.

In response to SB674, in 2012 the MSDE released Process and Procedures for Offering Student Online Courses in Maryland Public Schools.[267] The document outlines school district responsibilities, minimum training requirements for teachers, an online course review process, the process for converting face-to-face courses to online courses, and MSDE responsibilities in the course approval process. Online course facilitators for MSDE courses must successfully complete an MSDE-approved online three-credit course followed by a shadowing experience with a veteran facilitator for 30 or more hours.

[265] Maryland Virtual Learning Opportunities was established in 2002 by HB1197; retrieved June 30, 2014; http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/2002rs/bills/hb/hb1197t.pdf

[266] Maryland SB674 (2012); retrieved June 30, 2014; http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/webmga/frmMain.aspx?tab=subject3&ys=2012rs/billfile/sb0674.htm

[267] *MSDE Process and Procedures for Offering Student Online Courses in Maryland Public Schools*; retrieved June 30, 2014; http://mdk12online.org/docs/Process_and_Procedures.pdf

The Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR)[268] defines credit-bearing online courses as those in which "80% or more of instruction is conducted online." Courses that provide up to 80% of the instruction online do not have any requirements other than those that apply to all courses in Maryland. COMAR[269] also requires the MSDE to create online course approval processes as outlined in the process and procedures document; it allows the MSDE to charge a vendor fee of $1,400 per course evaluation. If an approved contractor reviews a course, MSDE may charge the vendor a $360 course fee for the final approval process. Additional online course evaluation and approval responsibilities are defined in SB461 (2013),[270] which requires the MSDE course evaluation process meet the accessibility needs of students.

SB689[271] (2012) created the Maryland Advisory Council for Virtual Learning, which reports annual recommendations to the state superintendent regarding digital learning issues and clarifies procedures related to the council and its composition.[272] The council is charged with submitting an annual report to the governor.[273]

HB1362 (2010) authorized school districts to establish a virtual public school subject to the approval of the state superintendent.[274] As of July 2014, no districts have requested approval for a virtual school. The law also did not change an existing provision of a charter school law that requires that students be "physically present on school premises."[275] Maryland does not have statewide fully online schools.

For the second consecutive year, the governor's budget[276] appropriated $3.5 million to support the Digital Learning Innovation Fund, a grant program to be used for "projects that accelerate local school systems' conversion to digital learning." Grants range from $500,000 to $1 million based on the size of the district; seven grants were awarded in SY 2013–14. The MSDE is charged with developing the standards used to allocate the funds to districts. This includes determining how projects advance student learning and comply with the technology requirements of Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC), the online assessments that align with the Common Core State Standards. A committee, consisting of members inside and outside the MSDE, evaluates the proposals and presents prospective recipients to the state superintendent before submission to the General Assembly for funding approval.

Online programs

Maryland Virtual School (MVS), the online course component of the MVLO program, provides many services associated with state virtual schools. It reviews and approves the online courses that districts can offer, maintains and publishes a catalog of approved online courses and technical requirements for courses, and provides approved vendor contact information. MVS delegated the online course enrollment process to districts in 2009. In addition, districts determine the funding allocated for online courses and student enrollment requirements. Districts reported 4,817 course enrollments for SY 2013–14. The MSDE recommends that districts report online course enrollments based on the definition provided by COMAR, but reporting is not required, and as a result, online course enrollments are likely under-reported. MVLO also offers tuition-free High School Assessment online and blended courses to students in four subject areas.

[268] Code of Maryland Regulations 13A.04.15.02; retrieved June 30, 2014; http://www.dsd.state.md.us/comar/getfile.aspx?file=13a.04.15.02.htm
[269] Code of Maryland Regulations 13A.04.15.04; retrieved June 30, 2014; http://www.dsd.state.md.us/comar/getfile.aspx?file=13a.04.15.04.htm
[270] SB461 (2013); retrieved June 30, 2014; http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/2013RS/bills/sb/sb0461T.pdf
[271] HB689 (2012); retrieved June 30, 2014; http://mlis.state.md.us/2012rs/bills/sb/sb0689t.pdf
[272] *Keeping Pace 2013* included a reference to HB532 that added specificity to the responsibilities of the Advisory Council for Virtual Learning. HB532 did not pass and its requirements do not impact the work of the Council.
[273] Annual Maryland Advisory Council for Virtual Learning reports can be found at the Maryland Legislative Library; retrieved July 11, 2014; http://dls.state.md.us/Content.aspx?page=131. The Council's report on Online Course Graduation Requirements (2013) is available at http://dlslibrary.state.md.us/publications/Exec/MSDE/ED7-10B-06(c)_2013.pdf.
[274] HB1362 (2010); retrieved June 30, 2014; http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/webmga/frmMain.aspx?tab=subject3&ys=2010rs/billfile/hb1362.htm
[275] Section § 9-102; retrieved June 30, 2014; http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/programs/charter_schools/docs/md_charter_school_laws.htm
[276] HB 100 (2014), Chapter 423; retrieved July 1, 2014; http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/webmga/frmMain.aspx?pid=billpage&stab=03&id=hb0100&tab=subject3&ys=2013RS

Massachusetts

DIGITAL LEARNING STATE SNAPSHOT

Two fully online schools are authorized to operate in SY 2014–15. MAVA, the only school open in SY 2013–14, served **454 students**.

An **estimated 2.5% of the state's high school students took classes** through The Virtual High School (VHS).

Availability of online learning options

SUPPLEMENTAL			FULLY ONLINE		
K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)	K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)
NONE	SOME	SOME	SOME	SOME	SOME

Availability of info: Great, Good, Fair, **Poor**, Minimal

Does this state have…

	Y	N	
Student choice for publicly funded fully online schools?	●		*Two schools in SY 2014–15.*
Student choice for publicly funded supplemental online courses?		●	
SVS or another publicly funded option for private / homeschool students?		●	*No more than 2% of students statewide in virtual schools.*
Prior public school attendance requirement for online schools?		●	
Online caps by class, school, district, or statewide?	●		*At least 5% of students from sponsoring district or collaborative.*
PD requirement for online teachers?		●	
State approval process for online providers?	●		
State approval process for online courses?		●	*No more than 10 virtual schools.*
Online learning requirement for students?		●	
End-of-course exams?	●		*In 4 subjects.*
Separate state reporting of online course enrollments?	●		*For CMVS only.*

Massachusetts has two fully online schools and a few supplemental options for students. In SY 2013–14, 7,100 students took a class through The Virtual High School (VHS), an estimated 2.5% of the state's high school population and a 26% increase over the prior year (VHS is located in Massachusetts). "An Act Establishing Commonwealth Virtual Schools" (H4274/Chapter 379[277]) was approved by the legislature in January 2013, providing a new framework for online and supplemental K–12 educational opportunities for students.

Chapter 379 built on previous legislation that opened the door for virtual schools in Massachusetts. It defined "Commonwealth virtual school" as a public school operated by a board of trustees whose teachers primarily teach from a remote location using the Internet or other computer-based methods, and whose students are not required to be located at the physical premises of the school. It stated that:[278]

- A single school district, two or more school districts, an education collaborative, an institution of higher education, a non-profit entity, two or more certified teachers, or parents are eligible to submit proposals for a Commonwealth of Massachusetts Virtual School (CMVS). Private and parochial schools and for-profit entities are not eligible. CMVS are approved for three to five years.
- The board may authorize no more than three CMVS for the 2013–16 school years, three more CMVS for the 2016–19 school years, and four additional CMVS for SY 2019–20.

[277] Commonwealth Virtual Schools were created by Chapter 379 (2013); retrieved June 26, 2014; https://malegislature.gov/Laws/SessionLaws/Acts/2012/Chapter379. They are governed by Chapter 71, Section 94; https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleXII/Chapter71/Section94 and Board Regulations, http://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/603cmr52.html

[278] Virtual Schools: Report on New Legislation and Proposed Delegation of Authority to Commissioner; retrieved July 3, 2014; http://www.doe.mass.edu/boe/docs/2013-01/item4.html

- No more than 2% (roughly 19,000) of students enrolled in public schools statewide may be enrolled full time in virtual schools, and at least 5% of the students enrolled in a CMVS must come from the sponsoring district or collaborative.
- A school committee (district school board) may vote to restrict enrollment of its students in CMVS if its total student enrollment in virtual schools exceeds 1% of the district's student population.

Details about reporting requirements for CMVS can be found on the department of elementary and secondary education (ESE) website.[279] Specifically, each CMVS is required to submit an annual report to the ESE (the first report will be delivered in January 2015). In addition, the ESE must publish annual reports on CMVS covering academic performance and demographic data, and must report to the legislature on implementation and impact of the CMVS regulations. The first accountability report is set to be released in early fall 2014,[280] and focuses on the Greenfield Virtual School because it was the only school operating in SY 2013–14. In July 2014, the ESE published regulations offering detailed guidance to virtual schools regarding the application process, student enrollment, financial management, timelines, and reporting.[281]

Chapter 379 also required the ESE develop and publish a list of online courses aligned with current state academic standards that school districts may use. It published the rubric to be used for approval and identified free courses that meet the standards in the rubric, but no providers have yet applied for that approval as of July 2014. School districts are not required to use approved courses.

Two virtual schools are authorized to operate in SY 2014–15 as CMVS. Massachusetts Virtual Academy (MAVA) was established in 2010 as a Virtual Innovation School (603 CMR 48.05),[282] a non-charter district school with more autonomy than a traditional public school, becoming the state's first fully online school. With Chapter 379, MAVA was required to apply to become a CMVS, and it was approved as the Greenfield Virtual School in July 2013. The school served 454 students in grades K–12 in SY 2013–14 (under a cap of 750, 250 of whom could be high school students).[283] This was a decrease of 5% from SY 2012–13. The enrollment cap increased to 1,000 students for SY 2014–15 and will increase to 1,250 for SY 2015–16. While future CMVS will require that 5% of students be local, MAVA is grandfathered in at 2%.

TEC Connections Academy (TECCA) was approved to serve K–12 students statewide beginning in school year 2014–15; it is initially approved for three years.[284] The school may serve up to 1,000 students in its first year, 1,500 the second, and 2,000 in its third. The school is sponsored by The Educational Collaborative (TEC), which was formed in 1980 by suburban Boston school districts. It launched TEC Online Academy in 2009, which offers a catalog of over 40 online courses, serving 354 supplemental course enrollments in SY 2013–14 in 16 member districts and other Commonwealth districts funded via a student fee typically paid by the sending district.

According to Chapter 379, the cost for students attending a CMVS is set at the "school choice tuition amount" (up to $5,000), although ESE may approve alternate amounts within limits. Both MAVA and TECCA are funded at $6,700 per student. The CMVS approval process required schools that wished to open for SY 2015–16 to submit an initial application by July 1, 2014; no schools applied.

In July 2013 the state closed MassONE, a state program to provide tools and resources to educators.

[279] ESE Reporting Requirements and Ongoing Review, 603 CMR 52.08; retrieved August 1, 2014; http://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/603cmr52.html?section=08

[280] The ESE report on CMVS will be available in fall 2014 at; http://www.doe.mass.edu/odl/cmvs/. The 2012–13 Digital Learning in Massachusetts report can be found at http://www.doe.mass.edu/odl/etreport/2012.pdf.

[281] 603 CMR 52.00 Virtual School Regulations; retrieved July 31, 2014; http://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/603cmr52.html

[282] Innovation Schools Statute: Mass. General Laws Chapter 71, Section 92 (as added by Section 8 of Chapter 12 of the Acts of 2010); retrieved June 26, 2014; https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleXII/Chapter71/Section92

[283] Massachusetts Virtual Academy at Greenfield Commonwealth Virtual School (39010900) Enrollment Data; retrieved June 26, 2014; http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/profiles/student.aspx?orgcode=39010900&orgtypecode=6&

[284] State board of education February 2014 Meeting Minutes; retrieved June 26, 2014; http://www.doe.mass.edu/boe/minutes/14/0225reg_0224spec.pdf

Michigan

DIGITAL LEARNING STATE SNAPSHOT

Michigan Virtual School, the state virtual school, served over **21,944 course enrollments** in SY 2013–14.

Public Act 196 (2014) continued Michigan's student choice program allowing students grades 6–12 to take up to two online courses per academic term without district approval.

Nine fully online schools, or cyber charter schools, are operating in SY 2014–15. **Seven cyber schools served 6,737 student enrollments** in SY 2013–14.

Availability of online learning options

SUPPLEMENTAL			FULLY ONLINE		
K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)	K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)
NONE	SOME	MOST	SOME	SOME	SOME

Availability of info: **Great** Good Fair Poor Minimal

Does this state have…

	Y	N
Student choice for publicly funded fully online schools?	●	
Student choice for publicly funded supplemental online courses?	●	
SVS or another publicly funded option for private / homeschool students?		●
Prior public school attendance requirement for online schools?		●
Online caps by class, school, district, or statewide?	●	
PD requirement for online teachers?		●
State approval process for online providers?		●
State approval process for online courses?		●
Online learning requirement for students?	●	
End-of-course exams?		●
Separate state reporting of online course enrollments?	●	

Students in grades 6–12 may take two online courses per academic term without district approval.

SB619 (2012) limits the number of cyber charters and their enrollments.

MI was the first state to require an online course or learning experience to graduate high school.

Districts reported 185,000 "virtual learning" enrollments in SY 2012–13.

Michigan has extensive digital learning activity, including fully online schools, a large state virtual school, single-district programs, and blended learning activity. Nine fully online schools, referred to as cvber charter schools, are operating in SY 2014–15.[285] Seven cyber schools served 6,737 student enrollments[286] in SY 2013–14, a decrease of 14% from the previous year.[287] Michigan Virtual School (MVS) is one of the larger state virtual schools, with 21,944 course enrollments in SY 2013–14, a 5% increase over SY 2012–13. A large consortium program, GenNET Online Learning, is operated by the Genesee ISD with over 400 districts participating; it served about 18,000 course enrollments through multiple providers in SY 2013–14. The department of education (MDE) reported that 344 out of 899 local school districts, ISDs, or charter schools (referred to as public school academies), were approved to operate with a seat-time waiver for fully online or blended courses for SY 2013–14. Finally, there are an unknown number of single-district programs, and there is significant blended learning activity through blended charter schools, districts, and MVS.

State policies

Public Act 60 (2013)[288] expanded student choice by giving students the opportunity to take two funded online courses without resident district approval as of January 2014. Public Act 196[289] (2014) expanded the program, and does the following:

[285] Education Improvement and Innovation; retrieved July 2, 2014; http://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,4615,7-140-6530_30334_40088-322569--,00.html
[286] MDE; retrieved July 2, 2014; http://mdoe.state.mi.us/SAMSStatusReports/StatusReport.aspx
[287] Charter Schools in Michigan; retrieved July 7, 2014; http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/Leadership_Briefing_June_2014_459357_7.pdf
[288] Public Act 60 (2013); retrieved July 8, 2014; http://www.legislature.mi.gov/(S(omrqbc55qqzgfb3qhsvpfu45))/mileg.aspx?page=GetObject&objectName=2013-HB-4228
[289] Public Act 196 (2014), section 21F, page 19; retrieved July 3, 2014; http://www.legislature.mi.gov/documents/2013-2014/publicact/pdf/2014-PA-0196.pdf

- Allows students in grades 6–12, with parental consent, to take up to two online courses per academic term without district approval.
- Allows a district to deny a student course enrollment request if the course cost exceeds the state's minimum foundation allowance, the enrollment request does not occur within established timelines, the pupil has previously gained the credits for the course, the online course is non-credit, the online course is inconsistent with the remaining graduation requirements of the student, the student does not possess the prerequisite knowledge and skills to be successful in the online course or has failed in previous online coursework in the same subject, or the online course is of insufficient quality or rigor.
- A student denied enrollment in an online course may appeal to the superintendent of the student's resident intermediate district.
- Allows a student to choose courses from a statewide catalog or those offered by the student's resident district. The statewide catalog, maintained by Michigan Virtual University (MVU)[290] for SY 2014–15, requires districts accepting nonresident enrollments for online courses to submit their syllabi to the statewide catalog, and to offer the course(s) on an open-entry and exit method, or aligned to a semester, trimester, or accelerated term format.[291]
- Requires a district to pay for the online course(s) from its foundation allowance, and "pay 80% of the cost of the online course upon enrollment and 20% upon completion as determined by the district." Districts do not have to pay more than 8.33% of the state's minimum foundation amount ($7,126 for SY 2014–15, so $593) for an online course and can deny the student enrollment if the course cost exceeds that amount or if the student's parent or legal guardian does not agree to pay the additional cost. The online provider sets the price for an individual course.

Over 185,000 "virtual learning" enrollments were reported to the MDE by districts during SY 2012–13.[292] For reporting purposes "virtual learning" is defined as students receiving instruction via "virtual learning, online learning or computer courses; distance learning; or self-scheduled virtual learning." At the request of the state legislature, the Michigan Virtual Learning Research Institute (MVLRI) at MVU authored a report highlighting enrollment totals, completion rates, and the overall impact of virtual courses on K–12 pupils, and provided a glimpse into K–12 virtual learning in Michigan.[293] The report revealed larger virtual learning enrollment numbers than originally anticipated, and identified mixed performance results.

SB619 / Public Act 60 (2012)[294] went into effect in March 2013 and did the following:

- Increased the number of cyber charter schools that can be authorized. Statewide authorizing bodies[295] are limited to authorizing a total of 10 cyber charters in 2014, and 15 after 2014.
- Increased 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. The law limited total statewide cyber school enrollment to 2% of Michigan's SY 2011–12 public school enrollment (about 31,047 students).
- Allowed cyber schools to enroll students from anywhere in the state, and in grades K–12. Cyber school students must be enrolled for one full FTE; they cannot provide supplemental online course enrollments.
- Removed the requirements that students previously be enrolled in public school, and that cyber schools enroll a matching percentage of dropouts to new students.
- Allowed 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" to

[290] MVU is a private nonprofit entity funded by annual legislative appropriations, course tuition, and private grants, and it operates MVS.
[291] For more info on 21f see https://micourses.org/resources/pdf/toolkit/detailed_21f_implementation_guidelines.pdf
[292] Michigan Virtual Learning Research Institute, page 3, Table 2; retrieved July 3, 2014; http://media.mivu.org/institute/pdf/effectiveness_report_2013.pdf
[293] Michigan's K–12 Virtual Learning Effectiveness Report; retrieved July 3, 2014; http://media.mivu.org/institute/pdf/effectiveness_report_2013.pdf
[294] SB619 (2012); retrieved July 18, 2013; http://www.legislature.mi.gov/documents/2011-2012/publicact/pdf/2012-PA-0129.pdf
[295] In Michigan the state public universities, Bay Mills Community College (a tribal college), and the Education Achievement System (EAS) may authorize charter schools statewide; retrieved July 2, 2014; http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/Authorizers_List_-_Public_-_Updated_031111_357452_7.pdf

operate statewide. Not all cyber charter schools operate statewide, although they can if their charter contracts and authorizers allow them to do so.

Cyber charter schools receive the same state per-pupil funding as brick-and-mortar charter schools, but less funding than traditional brick-and-mortar public schools.

In 2008, the superintendent of public instruction implemented a process allowing school districts to seek a waiver of the state's pupil accounting rules to allow eligible students to take all of their coursework online. The MDE reported that 344 local school districts, ISDs, or public school academies were approved to operate a seat-time waiver for fully online or blended courses for SY 2013–14, a 75% increase over the previous year.[296] This does not include enrollments in the cyber charter schools.

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.[297] Details on the requirement are available at www.kpk12.com/states/.

Digital programs

MVU/MVS provides a broader range of services than many state virtual schools. It receives state appropriation support to provide leadership in four key areas, to 1) provide an extensive professional development program to at least 500 educational personnel on the effective integration of digital learning into curricula and instruction; 2) research and establish an Internet-based platform, and facilitate a user network to assist educators in using the platform; 3) create and maintain a statewide online course catalog; and 4) support research and quality-related functions as part of MVLRI.

MVU, in partnership with Kent State University, ran a MOOC for K–12 students during SY 2013–14. This five-week course that focused on K–12 teaching in the 21st century drew 848 participants.[298]

Working collaboratively with several statewide organizations, MVU identified and developed a set of practical resources to support schools as they expand online learning options. The Tool Kit[299] includes implementation guidelines, sample letters, forms, draft policies, and an interactive Online Learner Readiness Rubric that can be used to identify individual student needs prior to enrolling in online courses. To create awareness of the state's online learning policies related to course choice, MVU partnered with the Michigan Association of Broadcasters and the MDE to implement a statewide radio / television public service announcement campaign.

GenNET Online Learning, a consortium operated by the Genesee ISD, offers districts access to 1,200 online courses through its Online Learning Portal. It processed more than 18,000 course enrollments in SY 2013–14, a decrease of 21% from the previous year. 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. Any school can enroll students in up to two courses via GenNET without a seat-time waiver.

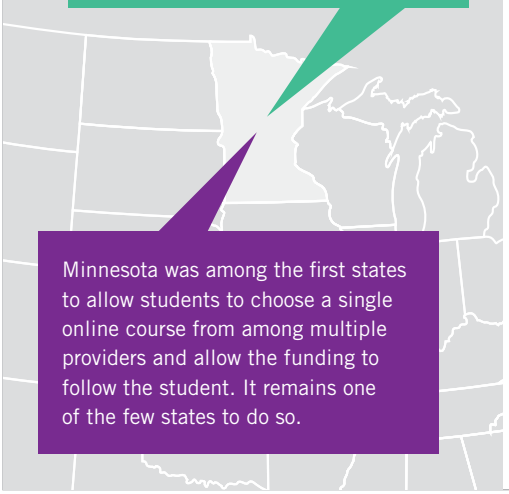
Michigan has a number of blended charter schools and district programs, including Nexus Academy schools in Lansing, Grand Rapids, and Royal Oak. Kent ISD opened MySchool@Kent in 2012, a blended learning program that accepts homeschooled and private school students in addition to those enrolled in Kent ISD public schools. MVU launched a blended learning program called MyBlend with eight schools during SY 2013–14 that offers districts a combination of services to personalize learning. The Educational Achievement Authority, a district comprised of many of the lower performing schools from the Detroit Public Schools, uses a blended learning approach that combines technology and online content with traditional instruction.

[296] Communication with MDE, July 25, 2014. MDE was not required to provide a legislative report on the number of students participating in the seat-time waiver program in SY 2013–14, but reported 7,850 students were taking 100% of their classes online under the seat-time waiver in SY 2012–13.
[297] Public Act 123; retrieved July 17, 2013; http://www.michigan.gov/documents/PA_123_and_124_159920_7.pdf
[298] Findings and Reflections from the K–12 Teaching in the 21st Century MOOC; retrieved July 3, 2014; http://media.mivu.org/institute/pdf/MOOC_Findings.pdf
[299] 21f Tool Kit; retrieved July 8, 2014; https://micourses.org/resources/21f_Tool_Kit.html

Minnesota

DIGITAL LEARNING STATE SNAPSHOT

Minnesota has online charter schools, multi-district programs, single-district programs, and intermediate districts and consortia of schools.



Minnesota was among the first states to allow students to choose a single online course from among multiple providers and allow the funding to follow the student. It remains one of the few states to do so.

Availability of online learning options

SUPPLEMENTAL			FULLY ONLINE		
K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)	K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)
SOME	ALL	ALL	ALL	ALL	ALL

Availability of info: **Great** Good Fair Poor Minimal

Does this state have…	Y	N
Student choice for publicly funded fully online schools?	●	
Student choice for publicly funded supplemental online courses?	●	
SVS or another publicly funded option for private / homeschool students?		●
Prior public school attendance requirement for online schools?		●
Online caps by class, school, district, or statewide?	●	
PD requirement for online teachers?		●
State approval process for online providers?	●	
State approval process for online courses?		●
Online learning requirement for students?		●
End-of-course exams?		●
Separate state reporting of online course enrollments?	●	

40 students per course / program.

Starting in 2014, all MN teacher prep and PD programs must address digital skills.

Multi-district programs, or where > 50% of instruction is online.

Full course listing is included in provider application.

Minnesota has online charter schools, multi-district programs, single-district programs, intermediate districts, and consortia of schools. There were 11,557 course enrollments in part-time programs reported to the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) in SY 2013–14, an annual increase of 16% (see Table 10).[300] In addition, there were 9,563 students served by fully online programs, an increase of 4%. 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. A comprehensive application and internal review process was implemented in SY 2013–14 to assure online provider quality and ongoing accountability, as well as eligibility for program expansion.

The Omnibus K–12 Education Act of 2003 (amended in 2010) set forth a number of policies affecting online education.[301] The department of education (MDE) was subsequently required by SF1528 (2012) to review, approve, and publish a list of all fully online schools, as well as schools who enrolled online students on a part-time basis from a nonresident district. Any school that delivered 50% or more of a student's instruction online was required to become an approved MDE provider and publish a full course listing, although district-level programs providing only supplemental courses are encouraged but not required to apply for state approval. Only approved online learning (OLL) providers generate funding.[302] Providers submit a letter of intent, apply to the MDE, host a site visit, and must address any concerns. Starting in SY 2013–14,

[300] Personal communication with Deborah Proctor, Minnesota Department of Education, August 26, 2014

[301] Some programs defined as "online" in Minnesota may include a face-to-face component. Students at TRIO Wolf Creek (grades 9–12), for example, study primarily from home, but are encouraged to spend five hours per week at the campus lab. See TRIO Wolf Creek; retrieved July 7, 2014; http://wolfcreek.chisagolakes.k12.mn.us/studentinfo.php

[302] MDE Online Learning Providers; retrieved July 3, 2104; http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/StuSuc/EnrollChoice/Online/index.html

approved providers participate in a three-year quality-review process that includes a reflective self-study report for renewal of MDE approval. Outcomes are posted on an ongoing basis on its website, including each provider's last / next approval year and current review status.[303]

Students may choose to enroll in online learning programs in one of the following ways:[304]

- Participate in any approved OLL program. No school district or charter school may prohibit a student from participating in online learning.
- Enroll full time in an OLL program through open enrollment, charter school enrollment, or 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.
- For a fee, students may enroll in more than their 1.0 average daily membership.

Digital programs

As of June 2014 there were 27 approved online learning public school providers that represent a mix of consortia, intermediate districts, charter school programs, and multidistrict programs serving students statewide.[305] Only approved programs are required to fill out annual reports on their program data.

Table 10: Minnesota's online course and program enrollments; data are self-reported.

	Supplemental (part-time)	Fully online	Total
Unique students 2013–14	5,520	9,563	15,083
% Change	0%	+4%	+3%
Course enrollments 2013–14	11,557	91,172	102,730
% Change	+16%	+24%	+23%
Course completions 2013–14	9,243	67,472	76,716
% Change	+16%	+41%	+38%
Completion percentage 2012–13	80%	65%	67%
Completion percentage 2013–14	80%	74%	75%

A searchable database of courses and programs offered by MDE-approved providers is available via the Minnesota Learning Commons (MnLC), a joint project of the University of Minnesota, Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, and the MDE. This state program provides an educational portal for consumer access to credit- and non-credit courses available through K–20 public institutions, highlighting online programs, courses, and resources.[306] MnLC funding is provided through grants and the budgets of member institutions.

In 2013, 12 existing online providers submitted self-reflective studies for MDE review. All appraised their programs against iNACOL's *National Standards for Quality Online Programs*;[307] confirmed that current course descriptions were in the state's ISEEK database; and identified their own strengths and weaknesses alongside related plans for program improvements. All 12 programs were reapproved for three years with continued annual required reporting to the MDE. Approved OLL providers seeking to expand their programs require one

[303] Three-year review process, MDE; retrieved July 3, 2014; http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/StuSuc/EnrollChoice/Online/OnlineLearningProviders/Three-YearReviewProcess/index.htm; and Approved Online Provider Approval Status and Upcoming Three-Year Cyclical Review Dates, MDE; retrieved June 29, 2014; http://education.state.mn.us/mdeprod/idcplg?IdcService=GET_FILE&dDocName=052273&RevisionSelectionMethod=latestReleased&Rendition=primary

[304] Minnesota Learning Commons Fast Facts; retrieved July 3, 2014; http://www.iseek.org/education/onlineenroll.html

[305] Minnesota Approved Online Learning Providers; this list is subject to change. Retrieved June 29, 2014; http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/StuSuc/EnrollChoice/Online/OnlineLearningProviders/004409

[306] Minnesota Learning Commons; retrieved July 3, 2014; http://mnlearningcommons.org

[307] National Quality Standards, iNACOL; retrieved July 3, 2014; http://www.inacol.org/resources/publications/national-quality-standards/

year of experience as a provider, and must outline past enrollment trends, the next year's targets, and overall growth management plans. Five providers applied and were approved for expansion for SY 2014–15.

State policies

SF1528 (2012) added significant detail to previous online learning legislation.[308] Revised language updated MS124D.095 (2010), MS122A.18 (2010), and 122A.60 (2010), and included the following provisions:

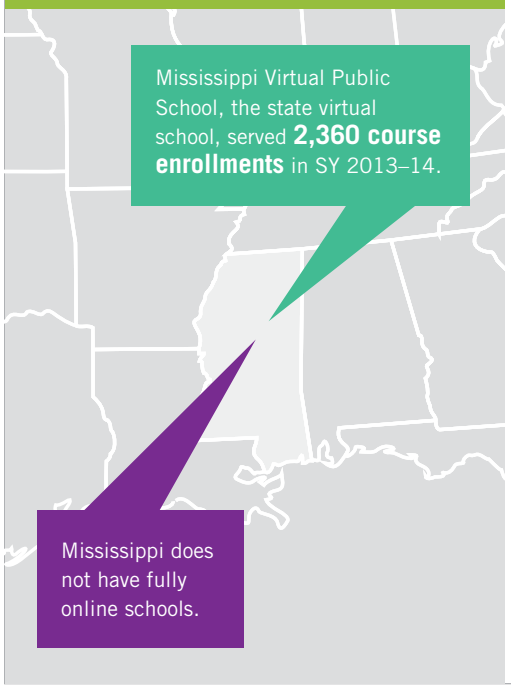
- All college and university teacher-preparation programs were required to include the "knowledge and skills teacher candidates need to deliver digital and blended learning and curriculum and engage students with technology," effective for candidates entering a teacher-preparation program after June 30, 2014.
- Staff development activities were required to include the ability to "accommodate the delivery of digital and blended learning and curriculum and engage students with technology."
- When serving only their own enrolled students, districts or other public entities would be automatically authorized to offer supplemental "digital learning."
- The department receives $26,000 annually to maintain, sustain, and support the digital catalog.[309]

Reports and recommendations from the Online Learning Advisory Council (OLAC) created by SF1528 are available on the council web site.[310] HF630 (2013) further amended MS124D.095—now the "Online Learning Option Act"[311]—to outline responsibilities for a newly appointed Online and Digital Learning Council (ODLC), which replaced OLAC. The ODLC reports annually to the education commissioner and the legislature, and must include implementation plans based on recommendations from previous councils. The 14 members of ODLC represent a wide range of community interests, and report on topics such as technology-based strategies to improve student outcomes and advance 21st century skills and knowledge; measures to determine the impact of online and blended learning; methods of personalizing online learning; and best practices for professional development.[312] Its first tasks are to look at supporting the expansion of the use of open educational resources (OER), and developing professional development for all teachers in the use of digital content.[313]

[308] SF1528 (2012); retrieved July 3, 2014; https://www.revisor.mn.gov/bin/bldbill.php?bill=S1528.3.html&session=ls87
[309] Minnesota Digital Curriculum Referral Catalog: Fiscal Year 2013 Report To the Legislature; retrieved July 3, 2014; http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/mdeprod/groups/educ/documents/basic/051317.pdf; and personal communication with Deborah Proctor, Minnesota Department of Education, July 14, 2014
[310] Online Learning Advisory Council; retrieved July 3, 2014; http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/Welcome/AdvBCT/OnlineLearnAdvCoun/
[311] The Online Learning Option Act (124D.095) 2013; retrieved July 3, 2014; https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=124d.095
[312] HF630 (2013); retrieved July 3, 2014; https://www.revisor.mn.gov/laws/?doctype=Chapter&year=2013&type=0&id=116
[313] Online and Digital Learning in Minnesota: Report of the Online and Digital Learning Advisory Council (Sept 2013-Dec 2013); retrieved July 7, 2014; http://education.state.mn.us/mdeprod/idcplg?IdcService=GET_FILE&dDocName=054126&RevisionSelectionMethod=latestReleased&Rendition=primary

Mississippi

DIGITAL LEARNING STATE SNAPSHOT



Availability of online learning options

SUPPLEMENTAL			FULLY ONLINE		
K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)	K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)
NONE	NONE	SOME	NONE	NONE	NONE

Availability of info:
Great
Good
Fair
Poor
Minimal

Does this state have…	Y	N
Student choice for publicly funded fully online schools?		●
Student choice for publicly funded supplemental online courses?		●
SVS or another publicly funded option for private / homeschool students?		●
Prior public school attendance requirement for online schools?		●
Online caps by class, school, district, or statewide?		●
PD requirement for online teachers?		●
State approval process for online providers?		●
State approval process for online courses?	●	
Online learning requirement for students?		●
End-of-course exams?	●	● *In 4 subjects.*
Separate state reporting of online course enrollments?		●

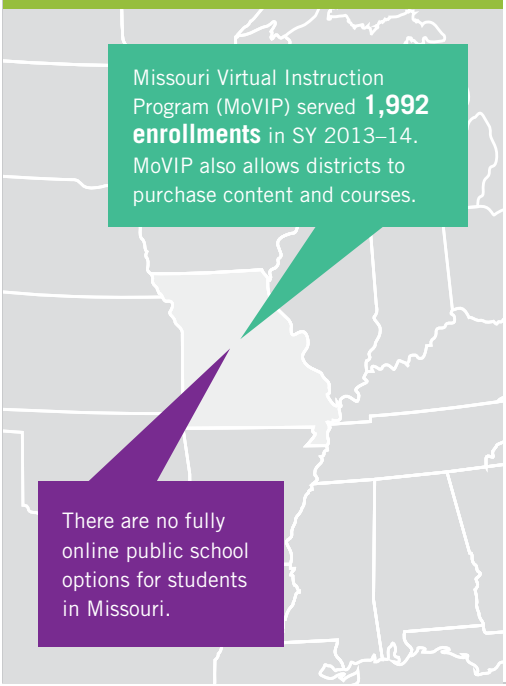
The Mississippi Virtual Public School (MVPS), established by legislation in 2006,[314] is the only major online program in the state. MVPS launched with $1.8 million in funding in 2009–10, but that dropped to $500,000 per year in the past three years. MVPS reported 2,360 course enrollments in grades 9–12 in SY 2013–14, a 24% annual decrease. All students must gain approval from their local district and are funded until the cap of $500,000 is reached; homeschooled students always pay for courses. HB1056 (2010) authorized the "State Board of Education [SBE] to select private providers … to administer, manage, or operate virtual school programs," including operation of MVPS. The department of education (MDE) continues to contract with Connections Education to run MVPS for SY 2014–15. The SBE 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.[315]

HB369[316], the Mississippi Charter Schools Act of 2013, updates the previous charter school law, the New Start School Program and Conversion Charter School Act,[317] which allowed only an existing school that fails for three consecutive years to request the state board turn it into a charter. The Charter School Board approved one of 12 applicants for SY 2014–15,[318] authorizing the first charter school in Mississippi. As of August 2014 there are no approved virtual charter schools, in part because the state does not have an open enrollment policy that would allow an online school to draw students from across the state.

[314] Mississippi Code 37-161-3 / HB1056 (2010); retrieved June 23, 2014; http://billstatus.ls.state.ms.us/2010/pdf/history/HB/HB1056.xml
[315] State Board Policy 5400; retrieved June 23, 2014; http://www.mde.k12.ms.us/docs/policy-manual/5400.htm?sfvrsn=2
[316] HB369; retrieved June 23, 2014; http://billstatus.ls.state.ms.us/2013/pdf/history/HB/HB0369.xml
[317] SB2293 (2010); retrieved June 23, 2014; http://billstatus.ls.state.ms.us/2010/pdf/history/SB/SB2293.xml
[318] SBE Meeting Notes, June 2014. Charter approval noted in initial overview. Retrieved August 8, 2014; http://www.mde.k12.ms.us/docs/2014-board-agenda/june-minutes-2014.pdf?sfvrsn=2. The charter was approved at the June 2, 2014 meeting; http://www.charterschoolboard.ms.gov/Pages/Meetings.aspx.

Missouri

DIGITAL LEARNING STATE SNAPSHOT



Availability of online learning options

SUPPLEMENTAL			FULLY ONLINE		
K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)	K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)
NONE	NONE	SOME	NONE	NONE	NONE

Availability of info:
Great
Good
Fair
Poor
Minimal

Does this state have…

	Y	N	
Student choice for publicly funded fully online schools?		●	
Student choice for publicly funded supplemental online courses?		●	*Although districts cannot limit access to MoVIP courses, funding is very limited.*
SVS or another publicly funded option for private / homeschool students?		●	
Prior public school attendance requirement for online schools?		●	
Online caps by class, school, district, or statewide?		●	
PD requirement for online teachers?		●	
State approval process for online providers?		●	
State approval process for online courses?		●	
Online learning requirement for students?		●	
End-of-course exams?	●		*In 8 subjects.*
Separate state reporting of online course enrollments?		●	

Missouri has a small state virtual school (the Missouri Virtual Instruction Program, MoVIP) and a few district programs, but no statewide fully online schools. There has been an overall decline in online learning enrollment in existing options over the last five years due to significant statewide budget cuts. MoVIP and Mizzou Online continue to serve students, often by charging a fee, although in the case of MoVIP, it is serving reduced enrollments. New programs at the district and postsecondary levels are opening.

Digital programs

MoVIP is the state virtual school created by SB912[319] and HB1275[320] in 2006. Overseen by the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), it serves part- and full-time students in grades K–12, although the majority of its enrollments are in high school supplemental courses. It does not offer courses directly; rather it contracts with seven external vendors including two Missouri programs: SE Webinar and the North Kansas City Schools eCampus, which is a consortium of nine districts. MoVIP served 1,992 course enrollments in SY 2013–14, an increase of 23%, but an 88% decrease from SY 2008–09 when enrollments peaked at 16,000. Funding for SY 2014–15 is about $390,000, the same as the previous year. MoVIP offers about 150 core, elective, and AP® courses. Most students pay tuition, although districts may choose to pay for students who are medically fragile, and unaccredited districts must pay for students who choose MoVIP classes; full funding details are available at www.kpk12.com/states/. MoVIP also allows districts to offer MoVIP courses using their own teachers in a blended classroom; the district has full access to the learning management system and course content, and pays the vendor for the course.

[319] SB912 (2006); retrieved June 15, 2014; http://www.senate.mo.gov/06info/pdf-bill/tat/SB912.pdf
[320] HB1275 (2006); retrieved June 15, 2014; http://www.house.mo.gov/content.aspx?info=/bills061/bilsum/perf/sHB1275P.htm

Other supplemental options include District's Choice Online Learning (DCOL), Mizzou K–12 Online, and some district programs. DCOL is a program of the EducationPlus consortium, which works with 61 Missouri and three Illinois districts and acts as a clearinghouse and course provider to students in grades 6–12. DCOL offers 150 courses through external vendors to individual students or allows districts to purchase whole courses. District teachers receive facilitator / teacher training in order to provide supervision, or Missouri-certified online teachers who are employed by the course vendors can also provide the instruction. Member districts work together to share instructors and course seats across district lines, but districts coordinate those exchanges among themselves.

The University of Missouri's College of Education operates Mizzou K–12 Online, which merged with MU Online High School in 2013. It offers 200 self-paced, asynchronous courses and 51 scheduled, semester-based courses for a fee, typically paid by students and their families. Mizzou reported 6,700 course enrollments for SY 2013–14, of which about 360 were elementary and middle school enrollments. The North Kansas City Schools eCampus offers supplemental online courses to its students and nine partner districts; Lee's Summit R-7 Online offers classes free to in-district students and for a small fee to out-of-district students; and Columbia Public Schools (CPS) Virtual High School offers a variety of online and blended courses to its students.

Hope Academy Charter School in Kansas City, which served about 600 students ages 16–21 who had dropped out or were at risk of dropping out, offered a fully blended option to students. It closed at the end of SY 2013–14.

State policies

Missouri passed legislation in 2012 that expanded charter schools while requiring more oversight, but the legislation did not address virtual charters. (Students who experience "transportation hardship" due to travel time or distance may in some cases be assigned to other school districts, but the only explicit virtual enrollment option is through a limited number of seats with MoVIP.[321]) Missouri does not allow for open enrollment, so existing online schools can only serve students in their own districts or partnering districts.

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."[322] 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.

The Missouri Chamber of Commerce commissioned a report to profile digital learning activity throughout the state. The final report, released January 2014, also made recommendations on ways to equalize and improve digital options for all students statewide.[323] Its recommendations included the following:

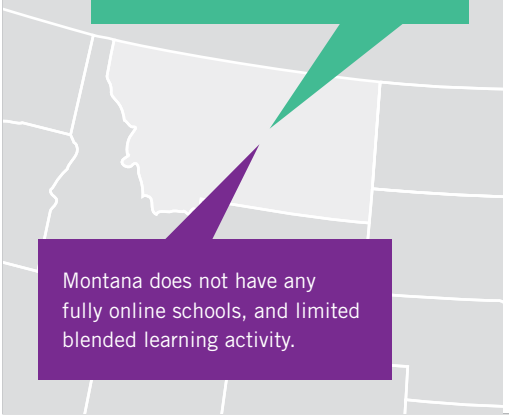
- "Allow full-time virtual schools for all students statewide."
- "Allow schools to receive 100% funding for students taking online courses without requiring seat time."
- Increase opportunities for rural students, and students in accredited districts, by offering fully funded courses through MoVIP.

[321] Missouri Revised Statutes 167.121; retrieved June 15, 2014; http://www.moga.mo.gov/statutes/c100-199/1670000121.htm
[322] SB291 (2009), Missouri Revised Statutes 162.1250; retrieved June 15, 2014; http://www.senate.mo.gov/09info/BTS_Web/Bill.aspx?SessionType=R&BillID=683252
[323] Missouri Chamber of Commerce, *K–12 Digital Learning in Missouri: Creating Virtual Pathways to Success*, January 2014; retrieved July 31, 2014; http://www.mochamber.com/mx/hm.asp?id=k12digitallearning

Montana

DIGITAL LEARNING STATE SNAPSHOT

MTDA is the state virtual school and served **6,785 course enrollments** in SY 2013–14, that also launched an online college and career readiness program that assesses student math skills and provides personalized intervention.



Montana does not have any fully online schools, and limited blended learning activity.

Availability of online learning options

SUPPLEMENTAL			FULLY ONLINE		
K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)	K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)
NONE	SOME	MOST	NONE	NONE	NONE

Availability of info: **Great** Good Fair Poor Minimal

Does this state have…	Y	N
Student choice for publicly funded fully online schools?		●
Student choice for publicly funded supplemental online courses?		●
SVS or another publicly funded option for private / homeschool students?		●
Prior public school attendance requirement for online schools?		●
Online caps by class, school, district, or statewide?		●
PD requirement for online teachers?		●
State approval process for online providers?		●
State approval process for online courses?		●
Online learning requirement for students?		●
End-of-course exams?		●
Separate state reporting of online course enrollments?		●

The only statewide online program in Montana is the state virtual school, Montana Digital Academy (MTDA). Montana does not have any statewide fully online schools. There are some small single-district online programs that are limited to serving students in their own districts. There is at least one blended school, but blended learning activity is limited.

MTDA is hosted by the University of Montana's College of Education and Human Sciences. MTDA served 6,785 course enrollments in SY 2013–14, down 15% from SY 2012–13. The MTDA credit recovery program was modified during SY 2013–14 in an effort to improve the rate of successful completion by students, which resulted in decreased credit recovery course enrollments. Previously, students were enrolled in multiple credit recovery classes at one time and were often unable to successfully complete the courses simultaneously.

HB2 (2013)[324] provided a $3.79 million appropriation for MTDA, split equally between SY 2013–14 and SY 2014–15. Montana has a biennial legislature with a fiscal budget covering the two years between legislative sessions. The current budget appropriation was based on the percentage increase in MTDA course enrollments during SY 2012–13: a 10% annual increase in original credit course enrollments and a 25% increase in credit recovery course enrollments. This funding allows MTDA to continue to provide online courses at no cost to public school districts and students.

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 each local school

[324] HB2 (2013); retrieved June 25, 2014; http://legiscan.com/MT/text/HB2

district, provides compensation for the local district teacher and reimburses each district for associated employment costs. MTDA teachers generally are 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 more students in original-credit classes, while larger districts tend to enroll more students in credit recovery courses. Credit recovery courses accounted for about 41% of MTDA course enrollments in SY 2013–14 after the adjustments in course enrollment policy.

In 2014, MTDA launched EdReady Montana, an online college and career readiness program that assesses student skills in mathematics and provides personalized intervention assistance to students as they prepare for commonly used placement exams such as AccuPlacer®, Compass®, and the ACT®. EdReady Montana also helps students plan for college and career opportunities by guiding them in making their selection of schools. Program access is provided for all Montana secondary and postsecondary students, teachers, districts, and colleges through private funding support. MTDA is collecting and reporting college and career readiness data to the state Office of Public Instruction and the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education.

State policies

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 online district program in Montana; it uses originally developed courses, supplemented by MTDA courses. The Kalispell Public Schools' Linderman Educational Center (formerly the Bridge Academy) is an alternative program that uses MTDA content in a blended learning environment with district teachers and academic support. School districts can only serve students who are residents of the district, preventing districts from offering statewide programs.[325]

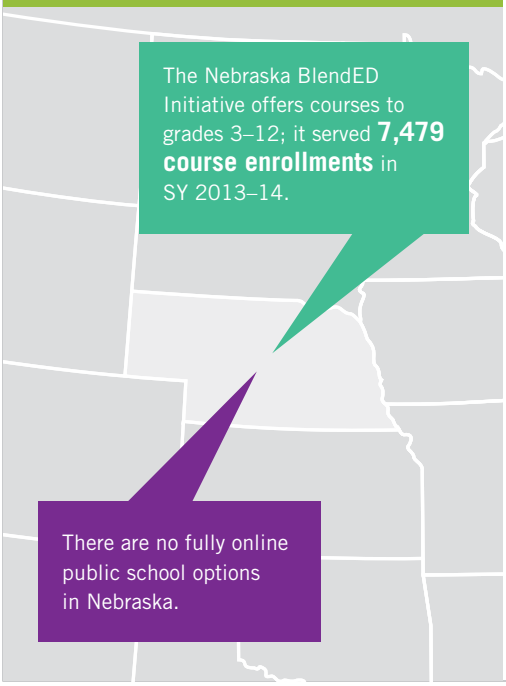
Providers of individual online courses delivered through single-district programs must register annually with the state.[326] Providers must identify all Montana school districts to which they are delivering distance learning; verify the professional qualifications of course teachers; provide course 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 Office of Public Instruction also publishes a set of online course guidelines, although there is no formal process for evaluating online course quality.[327]

State rule 10.55.907 governs online and technology-delivered learning in Montana.[328] State policies did not change from 2011–14. Additional information on state policies and the history of digital learning activity in Montana is available at www.kpk12.com/states/.

[325] Montana Code 20-7-118; retrieved June 25, 2014; http://leg.mt.gov/bills/mca/20/7/20-7-118.htm
[326] Montana OPI registered distance learning providers; retrieved June 25, 2014; http://opi.mt.gov/pdf/Accred/09DLProviders.pdf
[327] Montana OPI Checklist for Evaluating Online Courses; retrieved June 25, 2014; http://opi.mt.gov/Programs/TitlePrgms/TItleIA/Advanced_Placement.html
[328] Montana rule 10.55.907; retrieved June 25, 2014; http://www.mtrules.org/gateway/ruleno.asp?RN=10.55.907

Nebraska

DIGITAL LEARNING STATE SNAPSHOT



Availability of online learning options

SUPPLEMENTAL			FULLY ONLINE		
K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)	K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)
NONE	SOME	SOME	NONE	NONE	NONE

Availability of info:
Great
Good
Fair
Poor
Minimal

Does this state have…	Y	N
Student choice for publicly funded fully online schools?		●
Student choice for publicly funded supplemental online courses?		●
SVS or another publicly funded option for private / homeschool students?		●
Prior public school attendance requirement for online schools?		●
Online caps by class, school, district, or statewide?		●
PD requirement for online teachers?		●
State approval process for online providers?		●
State approval process for online courses?		●
Online learning requirement for students?		●
End-of-course exams?		●
Separate state reporting of online course enrollments?		●

Nebraska offers a combination of blended learning, video conferencing, and supplemental online courses to its students; it does not have a fully online public school option. Nebraska Virtual Instruction Source (NVIS) offers over 347 courses in the various delivery modes listed above to 237 of 256 Nebraska districts; it reported 7,479 enrollments in its BlendED initiative in SY 2013–14, a slight decline from the previous year. The Nebraska Virtual Partnership, along with the K–12 and higher education systems, the Education Service Unit Coordinating Council, the department of education, and Nebraska Educational Television, created NVIS. Schools are paid up to $1,000 per course enrollment, per semester, for courses exchanged via Network Nebraska, and must complete an annual report to NVIS to claim incentive dollars, which come from state lottery funds.

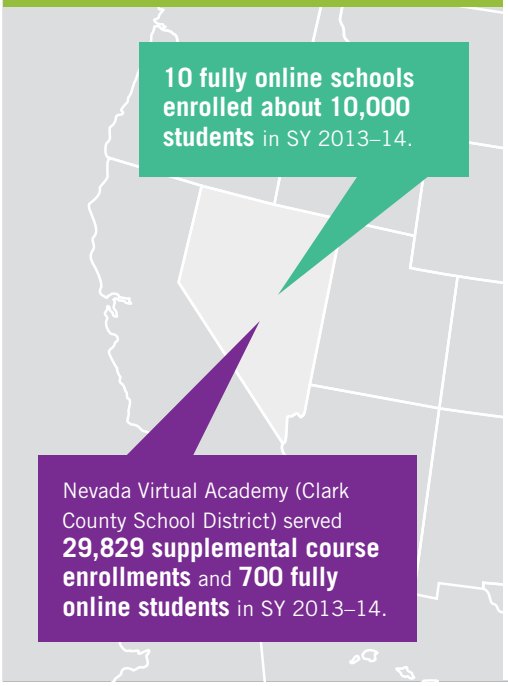
The University of Nebraska High School (UNHS) offers over 100 asynchronous online courses to students nationally and internationally. UNHS reported 2,679 unique students, including 239 Nebraska students, enrolled in SY 2013–14. Rule 10[329] states up to 50 of the allowable 200 distance learning units may be met through UNHS at the expense of the school. Nebraska schools pay $194 per semester course. The UNHS distance courses must be made available to all students at the school's expense.

The Nebraska Virtual Academy (NEVA)[330] is a consortium of schools offering blended courses through Moodle and video conferencing. 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. State policies created between 2006 and 2009 influenced distance learning across the state and are detailed at www.kpk12.com/states/.

[329] Rule 10, retrieved July 21, 2014; http://www.education.ne.gov/legal/webrulespdf/RULE10_PLEDGE_2012.pdf
[330] Nebraska Virtual Academy; retrieved July 21, 2014; http://neva-k.www.esu13.org/modules/groups/integrated_home.phtml?&gid=1835416&sessionid=2a582ec9e01597b2639fa3c9354d431d&t=9d1ddd3a11718412a598e5251bd81e3c

Nevada

DIGITAL LEARNING STATE SNAPSHOT



Availability of online learning options

SUPPLEMENTAL			FULLY ONLINE		
K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)	K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)
NONE	NONE	MOST	ALL	ALL	ALL

Availability of info: **Great** Good Fair Poor Minimal

Does this state have…

	Y	N
Student choice for publicly funded fully online schools?	●	
Student choice for publicly funded supplemental online courses?		●
SVS or another publicly funded option for private / homeschool students?		●
Prior public school attendance requirement for online schools?		●
Online caps by class, school, district, or statewide?		●
PD requirement for online teachers?		●
State approval process for online providers?	●	
State approval process for online courses?	●	
Online learning requirement for students?		●
End-of-course exams?		●
Separate state reporting of online course enrollments?		●

Funding to create a course choice program is being reviewed for SY 2014–15 approval.

Course providers apply to DOE for 3-year approval.

All online courses must be approved; approved list published by DOE.

Phased in beginning in SY 2014–15.

Reporting is required for unique online students, but not for online course enrollments.

Nevada has 10 fully online schools serving about 10,000 students, a 4% annual decrease;[331] an extensive digital program in Clark County (which is unique in that it serves 71% of all Nevada public school students),[332] and a growing number of supplemental programs in other districts. The Nevada Department of Education (NDE) regulates the approval and renewal of all distance education courses, with extensive resources regarding the program application, approval, and renewal processes available on the NDE's distance education web site.[333] SB58 (2013)[334] gave students the ability to enroll either part- or full-time in out-of-district programs, although funding was not specified. Amendments to state regulations for SY 2014–15 are anticipated to clarify part-time, out-of-district course pricing, laying the groundwork for a statewide course choice program,[335] but as of August 2014 these amendments had not yet been approved.

Digital programs

Eight virtual charter schools and two virtual district programs served about 10,000 fully online students in SY 2013–14, a 4% annual decrease. Nevada Learning Academy (formerly the Clark County Virtual High School) launched in fall 2004, and serves students statewide. It served 29,829 supplemental course enrollments in SY 2013–14, an annual increase of 5%; this included 10,582 course enrollments in summer 2014, an increase of 67%. It also served about 700 fully online students, almost triple the number served the previous year due to the district's independent study programs' merger with the virtual high school when

[331] Personal communication with the NDE and State Public Charter School Authority, July 15, 2014
[332] National Center for Education Statistics; retrieved August 11, 2014; http://nces.ed.gov/programs/stateprofiles/sresult.asp?mode=short&s1=32
[333] NDE Distance Education; retrieved July 15, 2014; http://cteae.nv.gov/Adult_Education/Distance_Education/
[334] SB58 (2013); retrieved July 11, 2014; http://www.leg.state.nv.us/Session/77th2013/Bills/SB/SB58_EN.pdf
[335] Personal communication with Jeffrey V. Wales, Distance Education Program Professional, NDE, July 14, 2014

forming Nevada Learning Academy.[336] Although Nevada Learning Academy serves some out-of-district enrollments for a $50 per-course fee, a large majority of its enrollments are in-district. North Star Online School (formerly the WOLF program) in Washoe County served 241 fully online students in SY 2013–14,[337] and most school districts serve at least some fully online students through either school or single-district programs. Other notable district programs include those in Carson City, Elko, Nye, Humboldt, and White Pine. One new district supplemental program was approved to open in Pershing County School District in SY 2014–15.

All of Clark County School District's 49 high schools have credit recovery programs using content from assorted vendors, and in SY 2014–15, roughly half of the district's 59 middle schools are introducing credit recovery or other digital interventions. Blended programs are on the rise in Clark County as well; 13 Clark County high schools had one-to-one programs in SY 2013–14, and a bring your own device (BYOD) pilot program allows students to use their own phones, tablets, or laptops for instructional purposes.[338] Blended initiatives exist in other Nevada districts, including Washoe, Douglas, Elko, and Nye, among others.

State policies

SB58 (2013) effected significant legislative changes for SY 2013–14, including:

- Removed numerous restrictions on the circumstances under which electronic instruction could be delivered, e.g. the need to operate as "alternative" programs for at-risk, or as independent study, or for students excluded from traditional public schooling due to criminal or disruptive behavior.
- Eliminated a requirement for pupils to obtain written permission of the board of trustees of the pupil's home district to enroll in part-time out-of-district online courses. In cases where the trustees' written permission continued to be required, permission should be granted in nearly all cases.
- Allowed an unlicensed employee to supervise pupils attending a course of distance education while the pupils received instruction from a licensed employee remotely, through electronic means.

SB58 did not address funding for part-time online courses, although anticipated amendments to the Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS388) and Nevada Administrative Code (NAC388) for SY 2014–15 would address the apportionment of funds between school districts (and student record tracking), ensuring that any pupil may enroll part- or full-time in a program of distance education provided by another school district or a charter school (at a charge of $250 per course to the resident district). Written permission from the resident district's board of trustees is required only if a student wishes to take all of their courses (i.e. a full-time program) outside of their resident school district. The student then enrolls in the district providing the educational services. Permission must be granted by the resident district's board of trustees in all such cases.[339]

Policies regarding distance education programs and charter schools set forth programmatic and reporting requirements, have the state maintain a list of courses and course providers that meet requirements, allow the state to review or audit the programs, and allow the state to revoke its approval of a program that does not meet requirements. The NDE approved 37 "Distance Education Course Providers" to be used by district programs and charter schools for SY 2014–15.[340]

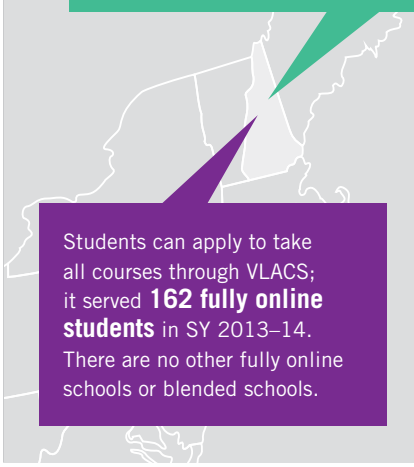
Extensive legislation surrounding distance education policy can be found in the Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS388) and Nevada Administrative Code (NAC388),[341] or on the NDE web page on distance learning. In 2011, the state board of education adopted alternatives to seat-time policies.[342] The Nevada Charter School Authority offers a document setting forth guidance for charter schools that wish to use distance delivery, which includes online, blended, video, or television.[343]

[336] Personal communication with Kim Loomis, Nevada Learning Academy, July 17, 2014
[337] Personal communication with North Star, August 14, 2014
[338] CCSD through the Mobile Device Initiatives; retrieved July 17, 2014; http://ccsd.net/district/mobile-device-initiatives/
[339] Personal communication with Jeffrey V. Wales, Distance Education Program Professional, NDE, July 21, 2014
[340] Distance Education Approved Course Provider List; retrieved July 11, 2014; http://cteae.nv.gov/Adult_Education/Distance_Education/
[341] Nevada Revised Statutes 388; retrieved July 11, 2014; https://www.leg.state.nv.us/NRS/NRS-388.html
[342] AB233 (2011); retrieved July 11, 2014; http://www.leg.state.nv.us/76th2011/Reports/history.cfm?ID=519
[343] Use of Online Curriculum and Distance Education; retrieved July 11, 2014; http://charterschools.nv.gov/uploadedFiles/CharterSchoolsnvgov/content/OpenASchool/Use%20of%20Online%20Curriculum,%20Distance%20Education,%20etc..doc

New Hampshire

DIGITAL LEARNING STATE SNAPSHOT

VLACS served **22,731 course enrollments** in grades 6–12; it acts as the de facto state virtual school. 20 middle and high schools (19%) are part of The Virtual High School.



Students can apply to take all courses through VLACS; it served **162 fully online students** in SY 2013–14. There are no other fully online schools or blended schools.

Availability of online learning options

SUPPLEMENTAL			FULLY ONLINE		
K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)	K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)
NONE	SOME	MOST	NONE	SOME	SOME

Availability of info: **Great** / Good / Fair / Poor / Minimal

Does this state have…

	Y	N
Student choice for publicly funded fully online schools?		●
Student choice for publicly funded supplemental online courses?		●
SVS or another publicly funded option for private / homeschool students?		●
Prior public school attendance requirement for online schools?		●
Online caps by class, school, district, or statewide?		●
PD requirement for online teachers?		●
State approval process for online providers?		●
State approval process for online courses?		●
Online learning requirement for students?		●
End-of-course exams?		●
Separate state reporting of online course enrollments?		●

VLACS allows some publicly funded FT students.

Cap on number of VLACS charter school FTEs based on state appropriation.

VLACS requires students complete a final exam at the end of each course and meet competencies.

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 primarily provides supplemental courses to students. Most digital learning activity in the state is through VLACS, which serves grades 6–12. In SY 2013–14 it served 12,047 individual students with 22,731 course enrollments, a 29% increase from the previous year. Although VLACS enrollment numbers come largely through supplemental courses, the number includes 162 full-time students. In addition, 325 students from 20 schools (19% of middle and high schools in the state) took courses through The Virtual High School.

As a 2013 Next Generation Learning Challenges grant recipient, VLACS is rebranding to VLACS Aspire[344] in SY 2014–15. It is a self-paced, competency-based program for grades 6–12; courses are open enrollment (students may start courses anytime of the year). With the support of an online instructor, a student may master each competency through a variety of pathways, such as independent learning projects, internships, and digital courses. A dual enrollment program, eStart, is a collaboration between the state community college system and VLACS that is offering 27 courses in SY 2014–15.[345] In SY 2014–15, VLACS will also offer an adult education program.

[344] VLACS Aspire; retrieved July 20, 2014; http://nextgenlearning.org/grantee/virtual-learning-academy-charter-school
[345] eStart; retrieved July 17, 2014; http://vlacs.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=158&Itemid=250

State policies

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.[346] VLACS was established in 2007 under the pilot program and approved by the state board of education. It receives state-funded tuition through New Hampshire's Education Trust Fund. Local schools are funded by the same fund plus local property taxes.

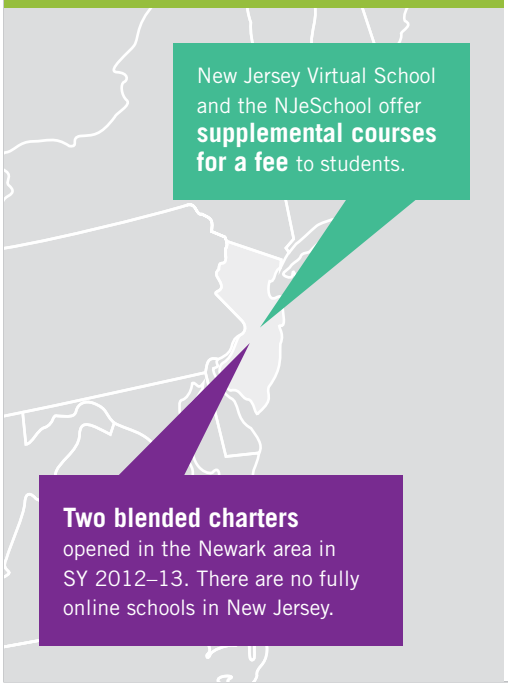
Currently, all New Hampshire charter schools, including VLACS, receive $5,498 for each FTE, which is defined as a unit of 12 completed half-credit courses. VLACS received funding for up to 1,051 FTE New Hampshire public school students in SY 2013–14; that number will increase to 1,209 FTE in SY 2014–15. VLACS receives funding from three sources: state education aid, out-of-state tuition, and grants. As a competency-based school, VLACS does not receive funding based on seat-time / attendance, but receives funding based on course / competency completion percentages (i.e. if a student completes 30% of the course, VLACS will receive 30% of the funding).

New Hampshire does not have policies that govern online courses specifically, but state rules on distance learning have been in effect since July 2005.[347] Most of the rules describe policies local school boards must set for distance learning.

[346] Title XV education, Section 194-B:3-a; retrieved July 17, 2014; http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/rsa/html/XV/194-B/194-B-mrg.htm
[347] Section 306.22; retrieved July 17, 2014; http://www.education.nh.gov/standards/documents/advisory1.pdf

New Jersey

DIGITAL LEARNING STATE SNAPSHOT



Availability of online learning options

SUPPLEMENTAL			FULLY ONLINE		
K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)	K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)
NONE	NONE	SOME	NONE	NONE	NONE

Availability of info: Great **Good** Fair Poor Minimal

Does this state have…	Y	N
Student choice for publicly funded fully online schools?		●
Student choice for publicly funded supplemental online courses?		●
SVS or another publicly funded option for private / homeschool students?		●
Prior public school attendance requirement for online schools?		●
Online caps by class, school, district, or statewide?		●
PD requirement for online teachers?		●
State approval process for online providers?		●
State approval process for online courses?		●
Online learning requirement for students?		●
End-of-course exams?	●	
Separate state reporting of online course enrollments?		●

New Jersey does not have fully online schools.

In 3 subjects as of SY 2014–15.

New Jersey has two blended charter schools and at least two programs that offer supplemental online courses. The New Jersey Virtual School has offered tuition-based supplemental courses to students in grades 6–12 since 2002; it served 4,675 course enrollments[348] in SY 2013–14, a 15% annual decrease. While it still offers a small number of fully online supplemental classes, NJeSchool shifted its focus in SY 2013–14 to providing content for extended-day classes where students participate in blended courses within Hudson County School District. About 2,100 students from 44 schools took classes through The Virtual High School in SY 2013–14.

In 2014, the New Jersey Supreme Court ruled that the Charter School Program Act of 1995[349] permits the commissioner of education to grant charter applications to schools that use blended teaching methodology,[350] since it was the legislative goal of the Act to permit "a variety of educational approaches which may not be available in the traditional public school classroom." In accordance with this ruling, two charter schools continue to operate using blended learning. Newark Preparatory Charter served 300 students in grades 9–10 during SY 2013–14, and Merit Preparatory Charter served 238 students in grades 6–7 during SY 2013–14. Two virtual charter school applicants were approved for two planning years in 2011 and 2012: the New Jersey Virtual Charter School and the New Jersey Virtual Academy Charter School. However, the department of education rejected both applications in June 2013.[351] Additional details can be found at www.kpk12.com/states/.

348 Personal communication with Sue Sullivan, NJDOE, July 21, 2014
349 The Charter School Program Act of 1995; retrieved August 11, 2014; http://www.state.nj.us/education/chartsch/cspa95.htm
350 Supreme Court ruling, DOCKET NO. A-0019-12T2; retrieved August 11, 2014; http://www.judiciary.state.nj.us/opinions/squibs13-14.pdf
351 NJDOE denial letter; retrieved August 11, 2014; http://assets.njspotlight.com/assets/13/0604/2000

New Mexico

DIGITAL LEARNING STATE SNAPSHOT

IDEAL-New Mexico is the state virtual school, and **two fully online schools** serve students statewide in SY 2014–15.

Albuquerque's eCADEMY VIRTUAL served about **6,400 students, 8,450 course enrollments, and 75 fully online students** in SY 2013–14. It uses a variety of blended approaches.

IDEAL provides any school district or charter school with free online course content and an LMS portal.

Availability of online learning options

SUPPLEMENTAL			FULLY ONLINE		
K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)	K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)
NONE	SOME	MOST	SOME	SOME	SOME

Availability of info: Great, Good, **Fair**, Poor, Minimal

Does this state have…

	Y	N
Student choice for publicly funded fully online schools?	●	
Student choice for publicly funded supplemental online courses?		●
SVS or another publicly funded option for private / homeschool students?		●
Prior public school attendance requirement for online schools?		●
Online caps by class, school, district, or statewide?		●
PD requirement for online teachers?		●
State approval process for online providers?		●
State approval process for online courses?		●
Online learning requirement for students?		●
End-of-course exams?	●	
Separate state reporting of online course enrollments?		●

Choice for students at under-performing schools is in law (SB427), but the program has not started as of July 2014.

No caps per law; however, existing virtual charters have self-imposed caps.

An online course is one of four requirements to graduate: AP, honors, dual-enrollment or online.

In 2 subjects.

New Mexico has a state virtual school (Innovative Digital Education and Learning New Mexico, IDEAL-NM), two fully online schools, one large district program, and other smaller district digital learning programs. IDEAL-NM served 2,823 course enrollments in SY 2013–14, and Albuquerque Public Schools' eCADEMY Virtual High School served over 8,400 course enrollments during SY 2013–14.

State "distance learning" rules[352] allow for the creation of fully online, multi-district schools, but stipulate 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 public education commission (PEC) of the public education department (PED) or local school district boards of education. In 2012, the first statewide virtual charter school, New Mexico Virtual Academy (NMVA), was authorized by Farmington Municipal Schools (FMS). NMVA served grades 6–12 with 496 students in SY 2013–14;[353] its enrollment is capped at 500 students annually by FMS. Funding for fully online schools is the same State Equalization Guarantee per pupil funding as traditional schools, although fully online schools are currently not eligible for the supplemental facilities funding brick-and-mortar schools receive.

[352] Title 6, Chapter 30, Part 8 analysis; retrieved June 19, 2014; http://www.nmcpr.state.nm.us/nmac/parts/title06/06.030.0008.htm
[353] Fully online school enrollment data obtained from the New Mexico Public Education Department School Fact Sheets; retrieved June 25, 2014; http://www.ped.state.nm.us/it/schoolfactsheets.html

A second fully online school, New Mexico Connections Academy (NMCA) is authorized by the PEC. NMCA served 481 students in grades 4–12 in SY 2013–14, and has a cap of 2,000 students annually per its charter.

Distance learning rules approved in 2008[354] 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.

SB427 (2011)[355] provided students in failing schools the option to choose online alternatives, with funding for those courses coming from the underperforming districts. The law defined criteria for rating schools, including student proficiency, growth, graduation rates, and college and career readiness. Ratings[356] and grades were first published by the PED for SY 2012–13 after a one-year delay due to debate over the criteria used to identify failing schools. For SY 2013–14, 82 of 831 schools received a grade of F. As of August 2014 there was no timetable for implementing the requirement for online choice as an alternative for students at failing schools. Regardless, 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)[357] 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 distance learning course.

Digital programs

IDEAL-NM served 2,823 course enrollments in SY 2013–14, a 5% increase over the previous year. IDEAL-NM has provided a statewide learning management system (LMS) through which K–12 and state agency training courses have been delivered since 2008. As of August 2014, 22 school districts (of 89 districts statewide) and charter schools operate independent domains within the LMS, creating branded web portals to access all of the courses offered by IDEAL-NM at no cost.[358] Districts can also create content for their own blended and/or online programs in the LMS. The portals had about 21,000 individual users in SY 2013–14 in addition to the IDEAL-NM course enrollments. In addition, a statewide eLearning Service Center supports the LMS for all the education and training entities.

School districts offering online programs include Albuquerque, Rio Rancho, Hobbs, Taos, Roy, and Las Cruces. Albuquerque Public Schools' eCADEMY Virtual High School is an alternative school with a comprehensive blended learning program serving K–12 students, with about 6,400 students and 8,450 course enrollments in SY 2013–14, a 15% increase in course enrollments over SY 2012–13. eCADEMY also enrolled about 75 fully online students in SY 2013–14. Gilbert L. Sena Charter High School operates a blended school for grades 9–12, and served 177 students in SY 2013–14. Rio Rancho Cyber Academy is a blended school serving 154 students in grades 6–12 in SY 2013–14. Students are required to study on campus either two or three days a week, based on grade level, and study online at home on the days they are not on campus. Although part of the Rio Rancho School District, the Cyber Academy is an "open boundary" school, accepting students from surrounding districts able to meet the on-campus requirements. The Las Cruces Virtual Learning Academy serves students in grades 8–12 with about 1,100 course enrollments in SY 2013–14, and has over 20 teachers who blended their class sections.

[354] SB209 Bill Analysis; retrieved June 19, 2014; http://www.nmlegis.gov/Sessions/07%20Regular/LESCAnalysis/senate/SB0209%20%20Cyber%20Academy%20Act.pdf
[355] SB427 (2011); retrieved June 19, 2014; http://www.nmlegis.gov/Sessions/11%20Regular/final/SB0427.pdf
[356] PED School Grading; retrieved June 19, 2014; http://webapp2.ped.state.nm.us/SchoolData/docs/1213/SchoolGrading/School_Listing_2013-09-27.pdf
[357] SB0561 (2007); retrieved June 19, 2014; http://www.nmlegis.gov/Sessions/07%20Regular/final/SB0561.pdf
[358] IDEAL-NM portal; retrieved June, 2014; http://idealnewmexico.org/portals/

New York

DIGITAL LEARNING STATE SNAPSHOT

New York City's district-based iLearnNYC program served **76,408 digital course enrollments across 260 schools** in SY 2013–14.

A $17 million initiative launched in January 2013 offers **online AP courses to students in roughly 95 school districts** in SY 2014–15.

Availability of online learning options

SUPPLEMENTAL			FULLY ONLINE		
K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)	K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)
NONE	NONE	SOME	NONE	NONE	NONE

Availability of info: Great, Good, **Fair**, Poor, Minimal

Does this state have…	Y	N
Student choice for publicly funded fully online schools?		●
Student choice for publicly funded supplemental online courses?		●
SVS or another publicly funded option for private / homeschool students?		●
Prior public school attendance requirement for online schools?		●
Online caps by class, school, district, or statewide?		●
PD requirement for online teachers?		●
State approval process for online providers?		●
State approval process for online courses?		●
Online learning requirement for students?		●
End-of-course exams?	●	● *In 13 subjects.*
Separate state reporting of online course enrollments?		●

The majority of digital learning activity in New York occurs at the district level (in New York City in particular) and among educational partnerships that allow districts to share supplemental online courses. The iLearnNYC program in New York City served 76,408 digital course enrollments in SY 2013–14. Several initiatives make courses available statewide, but there are no fully online statewide schools, nor is there a state virtual school. A statewide Basic Educational Data Sheets (BEDS) system[359] figures prominently in ongoing New York State Education Department (NYSED) efforts to track distance learning data in schools, providing evidence of increasing student numbers in Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) and district-developed online programs. Data have been collected since SY 2011–12, but no figures have been formally published.

Digital programs

NYSED's Virtual Advanced Placement® (VAP) is intended to develop the capacity of school districts and BOCES to provide digital AP® coursework to eligible students, and particularly to increase the successful participation of low-income students in AP® courses and tests. In SY 2012–13 an initial $17.1 million was available through NYSED; round 1 grants ranged from $259,000 to $2 million, depending on school district size. There are 20 grantees and roughly 95 school districts participating as of SY 2014–15. An additional $2.4 million has been made available starting in SY 2015–16, with priority going to districts, BOCES, and consortia in which at least 25% of students come from low-income families.[360]

Numerous small-scale online and/or blended efforts are underway in school districts and BOCES statewide, particularly among VAP grantees. The Greater Southern Tier (GST) BOCES' virtual learning initiative enrolled

[359] Collection of Basic Educational Data System (BEDS); retrieved July 15, 2014; http://www.p12.nysed.gov/irs/beds/home.html
[360] Personal communication with Office of Educational Design and Technology, NYSED, July 17, 2014

489 students in digital courses for SY 2013–14; of these, 410 were fully online students.[361] Wayne Finger Lakes BOCES' Accelerate-U / Edu-Tech provides online courses for students statewide, as well as professional development for teachers. In SY 2013–14, Accelerate-U served 326 one-semester enrollments.[362] The New York State Distance Learning Consortium (NYSDLC) supports the access of nearly 40 member BOCES to 21st Century learning technologies and services. "Meeting Common Core Standards Through Distance Learning" was a particular NYSDLC focus in SY 2013–14.[363] BOCES statewide, including Cattaraugus-Allegany, Orange-Ulster, Nassau, Eastern Suffolk, and others offer supplemental digital courses, supplied by a wide range of proprietary vendors.

New York City is the largest school district in the United States, serving about 1.1 million students (about 40% of the total student population in the state). In 2009 New York City's Department of Education established the iZone (Innovation Zone, or Office of Innovation), serving a "community of schools committed to personalizing learning environments to accelerate college and career readiness for students." Nearly 300 schools participate in digital learning iZone projects, including iLearnNYC (detailed below), Innovate NYC Schools (connecting educators and startups), the Blended Learning Institute (supporting teachers implementing blended learning), the School of One (offering competency-based middle school math courses in flexible learning spaces), and an Asynchronous Learning Pilot (integrating self-paced instruction into traditional classrooms).

The iLearnNYC is an iZone digital learning program which in SY 2013–14 provided students in 260 participating schools with online courses otherwise unavailable in their schools. iLearnNYC course materials are available for both remote and traditional classroom-based study, and related educational software is made available to students, teachers, administrators, and parents. In SY 2013–14, 34,305 students (an increase of 25% from SY 2012–13) enrolled in digital learning courses, with 76,408 total course enrollments (an increase of 36%).[364] In 2013, iZone and iLearnNYC worked with the iNACOL to develop a blended learning "implementation roadmap" for NYC schools and schools nationwide, providing guidance for school leaders on how to set school goals and implement the model that will best meet the needs of the individual students.[365]

State policies

In June 2011, the Board of Regents modified state diploma requirements to clarify requirements for earning both initial course credit and credit recovery through digital coursework.[366] Online courses must include "regular and substantive interaction" with the teacher in all cases. Detailed guidance regarding how school districts may utilize online instruction and content is available on the NYSED web site.[367]

State policies have not changed significantly since 2011 and are available at www.kpk12.com/states.

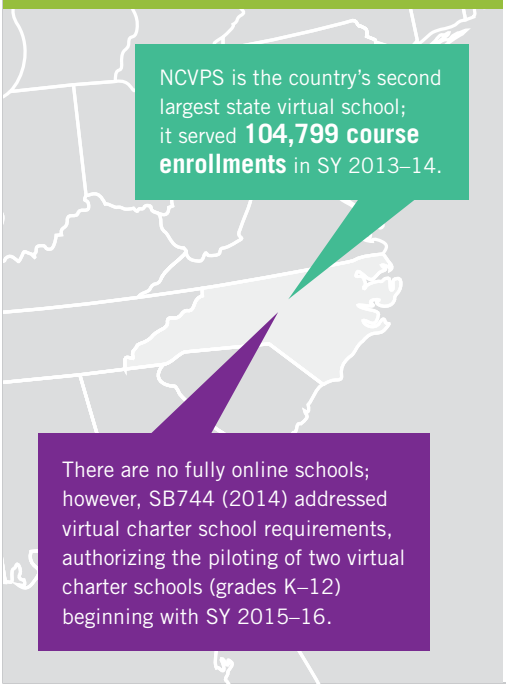
NYSED administers over $20 billion annually through various education programs and formulas, many of which improve digital learning and related professional development without making reference to online or blended K–12 learning specifically. Others target the integration of technology into teaching and learning as required by the Statewide Learning Technology Plan (2010).[368]

When a district participates in the services of a different BOCES (e.g. by taking another BOCES' online course), a Cooperative Service Agreement (CO-SER) is required. Under a CO-SER, online courses are funded by an enrollment fee paid by districts or students; funding can be delivered by any district or BOCES. Districts that meet certain state requirements receive aid from the state in the subsequent fiscal year, ranging from 50% to 75% of the amount paid.

[361] Personal communication with Erin T. Schiavone, Virtual Learning Coordinator, GST BOCES, August 13, 2014
[362] Personal communication with Mike Morone, Administrator of Online Instruction, Accelerate-U, July 22, 2014
[363] Grades Pre K–6th Videoconference Collaborations; retrieved July 17, 2014; http://www.nysdlc.org/tfiles/folder56/nysdlccollaborations13-14.pdf
[364] Personal communication with Azoulay-Lewin Celine, Executive Director, iLearnNYC, July 19, 2014
[365] A Roadmap for Implementation of Blended Learning at the School Level; retrieved July 19, 2014; http://www.inacol.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/iNACOL_iLearnNYC_Case_Study_October2013.pdf
[366] CR100.5(d)(10); retrieved July 15, 2014; http://www.p12.nysed.gov/part100/pages/1005.html#Credit
[367] Guidance Related to Earning of Credit Toward High School Graduation Through Online Learning; retrieved July 17, 2014; http://www.p12.nysed.gov/technology/Online/qa.html
[368] State Aid for Ed-Tech Programs; retrieved June 17, 2014; http://www.p12.nysed.gov/technology/funding/StateAid.html; and Education Technology Programs; retrieved July 17, 2014, http://www.p12.nysed.gov/technology/programs/

North Carolina

DIGITAL LEARNING STATE SNAPSHOT



Availability of online learning options

SUPPLEMENTAL			FULLY ONLINE		
K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)	K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)
NONE	SOME	MOST	NONE	NONE	NONE

Availability of info: Great **Good** Fair Poor Minimal

Does this state have…

	Y	N	
Student choice for publicly funded fully online schools?		●	*Virtual charter pilot program created by SB744 (2014) beginning with SY 2015–16.*
Student choice for publicly funded supplemental online courses?		●	
SVS or another publicly funded option for private / homeschool students?		●	*Enrollment capped at 1,500 year 1; annual growth is restricted. Student:teacher ratios prescribed.*
Prior public school attendance requirement for online schools?		●	
Online caps by class, school, district, or statewide?	●		
PD requirement for online teachers?		●	*License-renewal requirements integrate digital skills.*
State approval process for online providers?		●	
State approval process for online courses?	●		*Providers other than virtual charters that operate statewide.*
Online learning requirement for students?		●	
End-of-course exams?	●		
Separate state reporting of online course enrollments?		●	*Under review.* *In 4 subjects.*

Essentially all digital education activity in North Carolina is through North Carolina Virtual Public School (NCVPS), the state virtual school. Legislation[369] and state board policy[370] prohibit any state-funded entity from offering statewide "e-learning opportunities" without the approval of NCVPS, whether it is programmatic or at the course level. NCVPS is the second largest state virtual school with 104,799 course enrollments in SY 2013–14, an annual increase of 11%. There is local school district online and blended learning activity that is not subject to NCVPS review.

In 2011, North Carolina's SB8 revised charter school law, but did not specifically address the creation and operation of virtual charter schools. After more than two years of controversy and confusion, SB744 (2014)[371] revised policies and procedures established by the SBE in 2013 and created a Virtual School Pilot Program. SB744 states the following:

- Authorizes the piloting of two virtual charter schools (grades K–12) beginning with SY 2015–16, concluding with SY 2018–19. The schools must be approved by the state board of education (SBE).
- The pilot schools will receive the same state per-pupil base funding as brick-and-mortar schools, plus local per-pupil funding from the district in which the student resides or $790, whichever is less. The funding for the virtual charters excludes additional supplemental funding available to districts for low-wealth and small counties.
- At least 90% of the teaching staff must reside within the state, and teachers must receive professional development in virtual instruction within 30 days of hire.

[369] SB897 (2009); retrieved June 30, 2014; http://www.ncleg.net/Sessions/2009/Bills/Senate/PDF/S897v8.pdf
[370] State Board Policy GCS M-001. Section 10; retrieved June 30, 2014; http://sbepolicy.dpi.state.nc.us/policies/GCS-M-001.asp?pri=01&cat=M&pol=001&acr=GCS
[371] Appropriations Act, SB744 / SL 2014-100 (2014); retrieved August 15, 2014; http://www.ncleg.net/Sessions/2013/Bills/Senate/PDF/S744v9.pdf

- The maximum teacher-to-student ratio for grades K–8 will be 1:50, and 1:150 for grades 9–12.
- The maximum student enrollment in each school is capped at 1,500 in its first year of operation and may increase by 20% each year up to a maximum student enrollment of 2,592 in the fourth year of the pilot. The SBE may waive the cap in the fourth year of pilot.
- The schools must maintain a withdrawal rate below 25%. If a student indicates enrollment in the school for a finite period of time within the school year, the enrollment will not be counted in the school's withdrawal rate.
- The school must maintain an administrative office within North Carolina. If the school contracts with a third party educational services provider, the equivalent positions of superintendent, principal, or business officer must reside in North Carolina.

Previous SBE policies and procedures (2013),[372] such as the requirement to keep graduation rates no more than 10% below the state average (which was about 80% in SY 2012–13) in any two of three years, will be retained. Schools must complete a mandatory planning year, and provide face-to-face activities. NCVPS does not approve e-learning opportunities for fully online schools as it does for other statewide online course providers. While the Charter School Advisory Board has recommended one school for approval, SBE approval was pending as of July 2014.

In 2012 the SBE directed NCVPS to conduct a pilot and create a plan for a requirement that all students, beginning with the class of 2020, should successfully complete an online course before they graduate.[373] The results of the pilot have been presented to the SBE, and a decision is expected in 2014.

In 2013 the department of public instruction created the position of chief academic and digital learning officer[374] reporting directly to the state superintendent. The position is responsible for digital teaching and learning, instructional improvement system, data management, and special projects."

Session Law 2011–145[375] (2011) directed NCVPS to develop a revenue plan, submitted in 2013, that would permit non-public students and out-of-state students to enroll in NCVPS, and would allow the sale of online courses and content to out-of-state organizations. The committee will also study authorizing NCVPS to become a for-profit online provider.

A series of 2013 laws affected online learning. Session Law 2013-360[376] ensures all high school students have access to advanced courses, and notes enrollment may be provided through NCVPS. Session Law 2013-11[377] required the SBE, in cooperation with the board of governors of the University of North Carolina, to integrate digital teaching and learning into the requirements for teacher licensure renewal. It also required all lateral-entry teachers demonstrate digital teaching and learning competencies, as well as be able to apply formative and summative assessments within the classroom through technology-based assessment systems. SL2013-12[378] allowed schools to transition funding from textbooks to digital learning content, with all content being available in digital format for all learners by 2017.

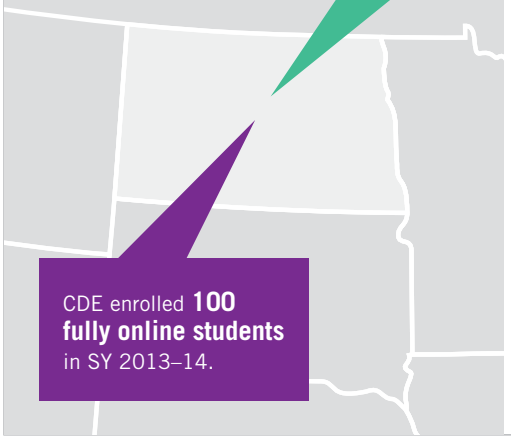
The state contracted with the Friday Institute for Educational Innovation at North Carolina State to work with the department of public instruction, the SBE, policymakers, educators and business leaders to develop the North Carolina Digital Learning Plan[379] to address changes in instructional practices, educational resources, technology infrastructure, and professional development in the transition to digital learning.

[372] State Board Policy TCS-U-015 (2013); retrieved July 7, 2014; http://sbepolicy.dpi.state.nc.us/policies/TCS-U-015.asp?pri=04&cat=U&pol=015&acr=TCS
[373] Meeting notes; retrieved August 5, 2014; https://eboard.eboardsolutions.com/Meetings/ViewMeetingOrder.aspx?S=10399&MID=728
[374] Department of Public Instruction press release; retrieved March 7, 2014; http://www.ncpublicschools.org/newsroom/news/2013-14/20140307-01. The NCDPI named Tracy Weeks, former executive Director of NCVPS to the position of Chief Academic and Digital Learning Officer.
[375] Session Law 2011-145 (HB200, 2011); retrieved June 30, 2014; http://www.ncleg.net/sessions/2011/bills/house/pdf/h200v9.pdf
[376] SB402 (2013); retrieved August 10, 2014; http://www.ncleg.net/sessions/2013/bills/senate/pdf/s402v7.pdf
[377] Session Law 2013-11 (HB23, 2013); retrieved June 30, 2014; http://www.ncleg.net/Sessions/2013/Bills/House/PDF/H23v5.pdf
[378] HB44 (2013); retrieved June 30, 2014; http://www.ncleg.net/Sessions/2013/Bills/House/PDF/H44v3.pdf
[379] Digital Learning Plan; retrieved August 7, 2014; http://ncdlplan.fi.ncsu.edu/

North Dakota

DIGITAL LEARNING STATE SNAPSHOT

North Dakota Center for Distance Education (CDE) provided **6,100 supplemental online course enrollments** in SY 2013–14, a **91% annual increase**.



CDE enrolled **100 fully online students** in SY 2013–14.

Availability of online learning options

SUPPLEMENTAL			FULLY ONLINE		
K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)	K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)
NONE	SOME	MOST	NONE	NONE	NONE

Availability of info: **Great** Good Fair Poor Minimal

Does this state have…

	Y	N
Student choice for publicly funded fully online schools?		●
Student choice for publicly funded supplemental online courses?		●
SVS or another publicly funded option for private / homeschool students?		●
Prior public school attendance requirement for online schools?		●
Online caps by class, school, district, or statewide?		●
PD requirement for online teachers?		●
State approval process for online providers?		●
State approval process for online courses?		●
Online learning requirement for students?		●
End-of-course exams?		●
Separate state reporting of online course enrollments?		●

NDCDE policy states that no teacher will be assigned more than 120 students at any time.

Online teacher certification is required for all NDCDE instructors.

Only out-of-state providers and their courses require annual approval.

NDCDE is required to report quarterly to Educational Technology Council.

North Dakota Center for Distance Education (NDCDE, or CDE) is the main online course provider in the state, serving 6,100 part- and full-time course enrollments in SY 2013–14 (a 91% annual increase). There were also roughly 100 fully online students.[380] Previously a correspondence school, CDE served its first online course in fall 1996. Districts also partner with local colleges on dual credit courses and utilize out-of state providers to create their own online programs and alternative school curricula.

Digital programs

The growth in CDE's numbers for SY 2013–14 reflects a reorganization plan and implementation of a new process-based management system for administration. Students from 174 of 185 high schools in the state utilize CDE courses; high school students comprise approximately 85% of students served. CDE course enrollments are primarily from students in small, rural schools seeking courses unavailable locally. The program has shifted toward blended learning in recent years, with the introduction of "blended experiences" to complement courses taking place online (separate enrollment figures for blended students are not available). Over 260 digital courses are offered, including core courses, world languages, credit recovery, and Advanced Placement®. Courses may be either self-paced within a 20-week time period, or scheduled by a teacher. Print courses are available as well. NDCDE requires online teacher certification, for both acquiring and maintaining online teaching capability.

[380] Personal communication with State Director, NDCDE, July 21, 2014

Since July 2013, CDE has been funded 50% by state general fund allocation, and 50% from course fees (the split was previously 20% from general funds, 80% from course fees). Local districts must approve enrollment of students, and determine whether the student or school pays the course fee.

CDE is overseen by the Educational Technology Council (ETC), which is responsible for developing technology systems to enhance and support educational opportunities for elementary and secondary education.[381] ETC also provides professional development for teachers through EduTech (Education Technology Services),[382] and in 2013 and 2014 provided grants for enhancing video classrooms and "classroom transformation" (across a range of technology-related initiatives). Among those funded was Park River Area Elementary, which is implementing a one-to-one tablet initiative in SY 2014–15.[383]

State policies

North Dakota Century Code 15.1-21-15 allows schools to provide academic services through the use of out-of-state electronic course providers.[384] 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. As part of the approval process, providers must make course details available for each course they plan to offer. As of August 2014, seven supplemental providers were approved: Aventa Learning, Fuel Education, Edmentum, Greenway, Jefferson County Public eSchool, Nelson Academy of Agriculture Sciences, and Odysseyware.

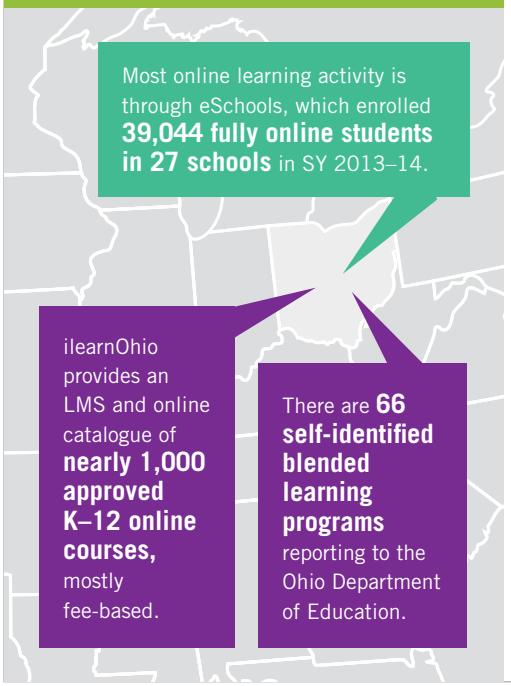
Charter schools are not permitted to operate in North Dakota.

Apart from the legislation that created the North Dakota Division of Independent Study[385] and the law that established the name for the Center for Distance Education, North Dakota state policies have not changed significantly since 2011 and are available at www.kpk12.com/states/.

[381] Chapter 54-59; retrieved July 28, 2014; http://www.legis.nd.gov/cencode/t54c59.pdf
[382] EduTech; retrieved July 28, 2014; http://www.edutech.nodak.edu/
[383] ETC Grants; retrieved July 28, 2014; http://www.ndetc.k12.nd.us/grants/
[384] School and provider forms; retrieved July 21, 2014; http://www.dpi.state.nd.us/approve/electronic.shtm
[385] Chapter 15-19; retrieved July 21, 2014; http://www.legis.nd.gov/cencode/t15c19.pdf

Ohio

DIGITAL LEARNING STATE SNAPSHOT



Availability of online learning options

SUPPLEMENTAL			FULLY ONLINE		
K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)	K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)
NONE	SOME	MOST	ALL	ALL	ALL

Availability of info: Great **Good** Fair Poor Minimal

Does this state have…

	Y	N
Student choice for publicly funded fully online schools?	●	
Student choice for publicly funded supplemental online courses?		●
SVS or another publicly funded option for private / homeschool students?	●	
Prior public school attendance requirement for online schools?		●
Online caps by class, school, district, or statewide?	●	
PD requirement for online teachers?		●
State approval process for online providers?	●	
State approval process for online courses?		●
Online learning requirement for students?		●
End-of-course exams?	●	
Separate state reporting of online course enrollments?		●

One-time waivers for AP courses through ilearnOhio.

Blended schools capped at 125 students per teacher.

iLearnOhio has its own approval process for all courses in its catalogue.

In 4 subjects, starting with the class of 2018.

Ohio had 27 eCommunity schools that enrolled 39,044 fully online students in SY 2013–14, and 66 self-declared "blended" schools. ilearnOhio provides an online catalog of nearly 1,000 mostly fee-based online courses for students in grades 5–12 (mainly at the high school level).

Twenty-seven eCommunity schools[386] enrolled 39,044 students in SY 2013–14, a 1% annual increase, and among the highest number of fully online students of any state. Of the 39,044 total enrollments, 37,125 were enrolled in statewide schools while 1,919 were in district-sponsored online community schools (with enrollment limited to the sponsoring or surrounding districts). Two eSchools are among the largest online schools in the country: Ohio Virtual Academy, which served 13,147 students, and the Electronic High School of Tomorrow, which served 13,537 students.[387] Effective in SY 2015–16, all eSchools with over 3,000 students can grow up to 15% annually, while those with fewer than 3,000 can grow up to 25% each year. Three schools newly opened in SY 2013–14 (marking the end of a moratorium) were limited to 1,000 students.[388] The state board of education adopted rules regarding applications for new eSchools in May 2013.[389]

Digital learning is flourishing in Ohio, which has various statewide programs targeting technology-enriched learning in the classroom. ilearnOhio is funded by the general assembly and includes a searchable repository of online educational content and a free learning management system for all Ohio schools. All courses are subject to an application and review process; there are 25 approved providers as of August 2014. One-time tuition waivers are available to pay for Advanced Placement® courses for public, private, or homeschooled

[386] A community school is similar to a charter school in other states; an eCommunity school/eschool/e-school is an Internet- or computer-based community school.
[387] Fall Enrollment (Headcount); retrieved August 12, 2014; http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Data/Frequently-Requested-Data/Enrollment-Data
[388] Status of HB 59 After Conference Committee on June 27, 2013; Ohio Alliance for Public Charter Schools; retrieved July 20, 2014; http://www.oapcs.org/files/u1/budget_handout_from_june_27_0.pdf
[389] Administrative Code 3301-102-09; retrieved July 20, 2014; http://codes.ohio.gov/oac/3301-102-09

Ohio students. Through ilearnOhio, Ohio was the first state to guide students to MOOCs (massive open online courses); ten MOOCs are offered free by Coursera for students in grades 9–12. Course descriptions state that, "There is no academic credit for taking any Coursera online course, but completing a course offered through Coursera may qualify a student for Flex Credit."[390] From SY 2014–15, blended K–12 educational content and professional development tools may be purchased through ilearnOhio under the Ohio eTextbook Pilot program. $3 million in grant funding is available in both FY 2014 and FY 2015 to support purchases by public school districts and "chartered nonpublic" (certain private) schools. Nearly 300 schools have received grant funding for SY 2014–15; as of August 2014, content was available from 55 publishers.

Through SY 2013–14, in partnership with the department of education and the board of regents, the Ohio Resource Center (OhiORC) has provided online, peer-reviewed resources to Ohio teachers, including curricular content as well as professional development opportunities. Lessons, assessment tools, and reading intervention materials are available through the Literacy K–5 program, while instructional resources for older students are part of an adolescent literacy (AdLIT) site.

The independent Ohio Blended Learning Network (OBLN), led by Mentor Public Schools District and facilitated by the nonprofit organization SmarterSchools, has 23 members statewide, ranging from small charter schools to large public school districts.

In FY 2014, $675,000 was made available to assess the alignment of digital courses offered through the state distance learning clearinghouse with the academic content standards adopted under Revised Code 3301.079 (amended 2013). HB59 also established the educational technology practice office and required it to develop digital learning, blended learning, and professional development materials, and evaluate and promote educational technology and methodologies.[391]

SB316 (2012)[392] made explicit the ability of LEAs to create or convert traditional schools, all or in part, to blended schools. eCommunity schools may not declare themselves blended schools. Revised Code 3302.4 (2012)[393] clarified that blended schools have enrollment caps of 125 students per teacher; must provide students with access to necessary digital tools; may allow students to earn credits or advance grade levels through competency-based learning models (providing exemption from seat time); and must provide for teacher licensing, training, equipment, library facilities, reporting mechanisms, grade promotion criteria, requirements for graduation, and such other factors as the board finds necessary. The board of education is expected to approve new rules for blended schools in January 2015, under Ohio Administrative Code 3301-35, clarifying the principles of competency-based education established by State Code 3302.4 (2012). Blended schools will be exempt from seat-time requirements to the extent that a school alters the hours that it is "open for instruction in order to accommodate blended learning opportunities" for all students. Students may earn credits by demonstrating mastery of knowledge or skills, advancing among grade levels based on credits earned.[394]

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 ($5,745 in SY 2013–14); these funds have been transferred from school district allocations. eCommunity schools are not eligible for additional state assistance.[395] District-based eSchools are funded at the same levels as other district schools, and are eligible for other funding categories.

[390] Flex credits offer students ways to earn high school credit other than through "seat time." See Accelerating and Empowering Student Learning; retrieved July 20, 2014; http://education.ohio.gov/getattachment/State-Board/State-Board-Reports-and-Policies/Ohio-s-Credit-Flexibiilty-Plan/FINAL-CreditFLEX-8-4-ExSummarySPREADS.pdf.aspx

[391] Amended Substitute HB59; retrieved July 20, 2014; http://www.legislature.state.oh.us/BillText130/130_HB_59_EN_N.html; and Ohio Revised Code 3301.079, http://codes.ohio.gov/orc/3301.079v2

[392] SB316 (2012); retrieved July 20, 2014; http://www.legislature.state.oh.us/BillText129/129_SB_316_EN_N.html

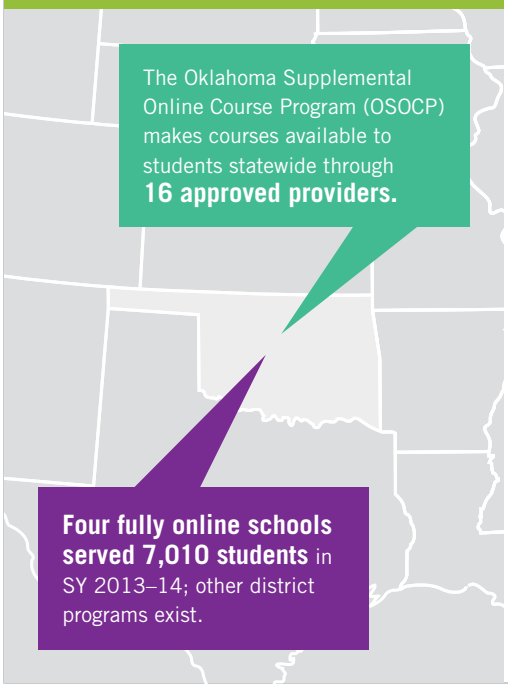
[393] Revised Code 3302.41 (2012), Use of blended learning model; retrieved July 20, 2014; http://codes.ohio.gov/orc/3302.41

[394] Personal communication with ODE, August 6, 2014; see also Administrative Code 3301-35-09 (effective January 2015); retrieved July 20, 2014; http://education.ohio.gov/getattachment/State-Board/Committees/Operating-Standards-Committee/Rules-3301-35-09-Red-Green-Line.pdf.aspx

[395] Community School Funding Information; retrieved July 20, 2014; http://education.ohio.gov/getattachment/Topics/Finance-and-Funding/State-Funding-For-Schools/Community-School-Funding/School-Options-Enrollment-System/Community-School-Funding-Information-Copy.pdf.aspx

Oklahoma

DIGITAL LEARNING STATE SNAPSHOT



Availability of online learning options

SUPPLEMENTAL			FULLY ONLINE		
K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)	K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)
NONE	NONE	MOST	ALL	ALL	ALL

Availability of info:
Great
Good
Fair
Poor
Minimal

Does this state have…

	Y	N	
Student choice for publicly funded fully online schools?	●		*By transferring into another district.*
Student choice for publicly funded supplemental online courses?	●		
SVS or another publicly funded option for private / homeschool students?		●	*OSOCP gives students choice, but decision lies with the district.*
Prior public school attendance requirement for online schools?	●		
Online caps by class, school, district, or statewide?		●	
PD requirement for online teachers?		●	
State approval process for online providers?		●	*Only to be listed in the OSOCP.*
State approval process for online courses?		●	
Online learning requirement for students?		●	
End-of-course exams?	●		*In 7 subjects.*
Separate state reporting of online course enrollments?	●		

Oklahoma has four fully online charter schools, the Oklahoma Supplemental Online Course Program (OSOCP), and two supplemental online programs operating statewide, as well as several district programs. The Oklahoma Department of Education reports 6,336[396] unique students who took courses through 16 approved OSOCP providers;[397] this number includes credit recovery and alternative education students. In addition, 7,010 students were served by four fully online schools in SY 2013–14.

State policies

SB280 (2011)[398] directed the state board of education to adopt rules to provide "a process by which students are not denied the opportunity to enroll in educationally appropriate courses by school districts." In June 2012, board rule[399] created the Oklahoma Supplemental Online Course Program (OSOCP) to establish a framework for school districts to offer supplemental online courses. That rule allows students to take up to five hours of supplemental online instruction at no cost to the student; funding is prorated to the prior year's per pupil expenditure. The original legislation was further clarified in SB419 (2013), which defined 'educationally appropriate' as "any instruction that is not substantially a repeat of a course or portion of a course that the student has successfully completed, regardless of the grade of the student, and

[396] Enrollment numbers are DOE estimates based on self-reported data from schools.
[397] Supplemental Online Course Providers; retrieved July 21, 2014; http://ok.gov/sde/node/3544#List
[398] SB280 (2011); retrieved July 21, 2014; http://www.oklegislature.gov/BillInfo.aspx?Bill=sb280&Session=1100
[399] State Board rule; retrieved July 21, 2014; http://ok.gov/sde/sites/ok.gov.sde/files/Rules-Ch15Sub34SuppOnlineCourses.pdf

regardless of whether a course is similar to or identical to the instruction that is currently offered in the school district."[400]

Under the OSOCP, the board has approved 14 providers and seen an increase in unique students taking online courses. While each school district must adopt its own rules regarding the OSOCP, those rules must not deny a student the opportunity to enroll in supplemental online courses, although the district does have the final say in regard to choosing a provider. While each school district is responsible for paying each course provider, "payment to the provider will be based upon continued course enrollment and subsequent course completion."

The rule also allows students to earn one required or elective course credit by demonstrating "mastery of Oklahoma's PASS and/or CCSS in one-credit courses without specified instructional time."

SB1816[401] (2012) created the Statewide Virtual Charter School Board; SB267 (2013)[402] amended the original legislation. The board offers oversight of the operations and is the sole authorizer of all statewide virtual charter schools; it also established policies and procedures for accepting, approving, disapproving, and renewing statewide virtual charter school applications. Four charter schools were approved for SY 2014–15.

SB267 also prevented a school district from offering a fully online education to students who reside outside the district, which forced two of the fully online schools to seek a charter with the board in order to continue operations. One of the schools, Oklahoma Connections Academy, was approved to become a charter.

Students can transfer across districts during the state's annual open transfer period of January 1 through April 1, or apply for an "emergency" transfer, which must be approved by both the sending and receiving districts. State funding is paid to the school district based on standard per-pupil public school funding regardless of the delivery method or authorizer.

Online programs

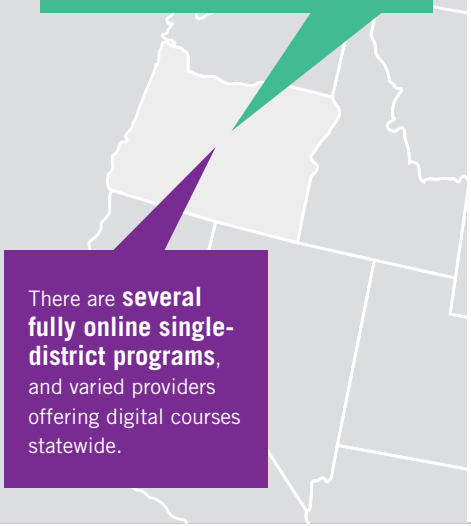
The Statewide Virtual Charter School Board is the sole authorizer to renew and approve statewide virtual charter schools; it approved four schools SY 2014–15. Two of the virtual charter schools were grandfathered in: Oklahoma Virtual Charter Academy served 2,818 enrollments, a 1% increase from the previous year, and Epic One Charter School reported 2,916 enrollments in SY 2013–14, a 30% increase from the previous year.[403] There are two new charter schools approved by the board for SY 2014–15: Insight School of Oklahoma and Oklahoma Connections Academy, which served 620 enrollments in SY 2013–14 as a fully online non-charter school. Oklahoma Virtual High School (OKVHS), operated by Advanced Academics in partnership with Hanna Public Schools, Stidham Public Schools, and Epic Charter Schools served 656 students in SY 2013–14. As of SY 2014–15, OKVHS is a program offered by Epic Charter Schools, which is an approved statewide virtual charter school. Tulsa Public Schools also offers a full-time virtual school to its students. Supplemental online programs include the University of Oklahoma Independent Learning High School and Oklahoma State University K–12 Distance Learning Academy.

[400] SB419 (2013); retrieved August 9, 2014; http://legiscan.com/OK/bill/SB419/2013
[401] SB1816 (2012); retrieved July 21, 2014; http://www.oklegislature.gov/BillInfo.aspx?Bill=SB1816&session=1200
[402] SB267 (2013); retrieved August 9, 2014; http://legiscan.com/OK/bill/SB267/2013
[403] Oklahoma State Superintendent of Education 2013–14 Enrollment Numbers by School; retrieved August 4, 2014; http://ok.gov/sde/documents/2014-02-13/state-student-public-enrollment-2013

Oregon

DIGITAL LEARNING STATE SNAPSHOT

11 fully online charter schools served 7,172 students statewide in SY 2013–14.



There are **several fully online single-district programs**, and varied providers offering digital courses statewide.

Availability of online learning options

SUPPLEMENTAL			FULLY ONLINE		
K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)	K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)
NONE	SOME	SOME	MOST	MOST	MOST

Availability of info: Great, Good, **Fair**, Poor, Minimal

Does this state have…	Y	N
Student choice for publicly funded fully online schools?	●	
Student choice for publicly funded supplemental online courses?		●
SVS or another publicly funded option for private / homeschool students?		●
Prior public school attendance requirement for online schools?		●
Online caps by class, school, district, or statewide?	●	
PD requirement for online teachers?		●
State approval process for online providers?		●
State approval process for online courses?		●
Online learning requirement for students?		●
End-of-course exams?		●
Separate state reporting of online course enrollments?		●

3% cap on the number of students in all virtual schools from each district.

Oregon has fully online schools, district-level part- and full-time online programs, and the Oregon Virtual School District (ORVSD), a program supporting digital learning statewide. Legislation passed in 2013 provided for additional teacher resources and introduced bring your own device (BYOD) legislation for SY 2014–15.

Digital programs

Eleven fully online charter schools served 7,172 students statewide in SY 2013–14, an increase of 8%. In addition, several fully online single-district programs and other providers offer supplemental courses statewide.[404] The largest fully online schools are Oregon Connections Academy with 3,405 students, Oregon Virtual Academy with 1,682 students, and Clackamas Web Academy with 436 students in SY 2013–14.[405]

ORVSD is a statewide network that provides a free Moodle-based platform of lesson plans, course content, online professional development, and Google Applications for Education support. ORVSD serves roughly 270 schools. Course content is from a variety of providers, including the National Repository of Online Courses (NROC) and others; open educational resources are utilized. ORVSD is funded through a legislative appropriation made to the Oregon Department of Education (ODE).[406]

[404] ODE Online Schools; retrieved July 26, 2014; http://www.ode.state.or.us/search/results/?id=334
[405] ODE Fall Membership Reports 2013–14; retrieved July 27, 2014; http://www.ode.state.or.us/search/page/?=3225
[406] What is ORVSD?; Retrieved July 27, 2014; http://oregonteaches.org/?page_id=1581

A number of schools operate digital programs through ORVSD and independently. Schools in Hillsboro School District, for example, piloted an initiative in SY 2013–14 examining the use of tablets with blended math curricula; the pilot is expanding in SY 2014–15. Select school districts (e.g. Oregon and Beaverton) are developing bring your own device programs.

OSU Extension, Portland State University Independent Study, and Chemeketa Community College Early College offer dual credit early college programs for high school students.

State policies

Oregon passed a series of education reform bills in 2012 designed to align the state public education system from pre-kindergarten through college; several 2013 initiatives resulted.

HB2426 (2013)[407] required that, effective SY 2014–15, each district school board "adopt policies for the use of personal electronic devices in the schools of the school district" to "support academic activities and independent communications."

HB3232[408] and HB3233,[409] passed in July 2013, were designed to "help turn around under-performing schools and improve student outcomes statewide."[410] This included establishing the Network for Quality Teaching and Learning, which receives $33 million every two years[411] in addition to one-time grant money of almost $13 million. The network provides teacher networking, face-to-face professional development, and guidance in course development in line with Common Core standards; the first grants to school districts were distributed in 2014.

The Task Force on Virtual School Governance made recommendations in December 2011 on new governance standards for online schools.[412] This resulted in HB2301[413] (2011), which allowed students to enroll in virtual charter schools without approval of the school district where the student resides. However, if more than 3% of the students who reside in the district are enrolled in virtual charter schools 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 may be taught by teachers who are not licensed in Oregon.

[407] HB2426 (2013); retrieved July 30, 2014; https://olis.leg.state.or.us/liz/2013R1/Downloads/MeasureDocument/HB2426
[408] HB3232 (2013); retrieved July 30, 2014; https://olis.leg.state.or.us/liz/2013R1/Downloads/MeasureDocument/HB3232
[409] HB3233 (2013); retrieved July 30, 2014; https://olis.leg.state.or.us/liz/2013R1/Downloads/MeasureDocument/HB3233
[410] Strategic Initiatives; retrieved July 24, 2014; http://www.ode.state.or.us/search/page/?id=3958
[411] HB2506 (2013); retrieved July 30, 2014; https://olis.leg.state.or.us/liz/2013R1/Downloads/MeasureDocument/HB2506
[412] Joint Interim Task Force on Virtual School Governance Report; retrieved July 24, 2014; http://content.govdelivery.com/attachments/ORLEG/2011/12/14/file_attachments/74680/JVSG_Report_Full_Final.pdf
[413] HB2301 (2011); retrieved July 30, 2014; https://olis.leg.state.or.us/liz/2011R1/Downloads/MeasureDocument/HB2301/Enrolled

Pennsylvania

DIGITAL LEARNING STATE SNAPSHOT

Pennsylvania had **14 cyber charter schools serving 36,596 students** in grades K–12 in SY 2013–14, a **5% annual increase**.

A growing number of district-based programs are available to students as an alternative to cyber charters.

Availability of online learning options

SUPPLEMENTAL			FULLY ONLINE		
K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)	K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)
NONE	NONE	SOME	ALL	ALL	ALL

Availability of info: Great **Good** Fair Poor Minimal

Does this state have…	Y	N
Student choice for publicly funded fully online schools?	●	
Student choice for publicly funded supplemental online courses?		●
SVS or another publicly funded option for private / homeschool students?		●
Prior public school attendance requirement for online schools?		●
Online caps by class, school, district, or statewide?		●
PD requirement for online teachers?		●
State approval process for online providers?		●
State approval process for online courses?		●
Online learning requirement for students?		●
End-of-course exams?	●	
Separate state reporting of online course enrollments?		●

In 10 subjects.

Pennsylvania had 14 cyber charter schools[414] that served 36,596 students in grades K–12 in SY 2013–14, a 5% annual increase from SY 2012–13. A growing number of districts, independent units (IU), and consortia are providing online courses for area students in an attempt to draw enrollments back from cyber charters. However, these programs do not report to the state, so it is unclear how many there are or how many students they serve. The state does not have a state virtual school.

Digital programs

Cyber charters have dominated K–12 fully online options in Pennsylvania since SusQ-Cyber Charter School first opened in 1998. Enrollments have grown steadily, and Pennsylvania Cyber Charter School, with 10,389 students, is one of the largest online schools in the country. In addition, Agora Cyber Charter served 9,490 students, and Commonwealth Connections Academy served 8,037 students in SY 2013–14.[415] One cyber charter surrendered its charter at the end of SY 2012–13; applications from six new cyber charter schools were denied.[416] Further enrollment details for cyber charters are available at http://kpk12.com/states/.

Districts have responded to what they see as funding "lost" to cyber charters (due to decreasing student enrollments) by opening their own online academies to bring students back to the district. IUs are also opening cyber programs for students in their regions. These programs typically offer supplemental or

[414] 2013–2014 Cyber Charter Schools Listing; retrieved June 28, 2014; http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/charter_schools/7356
[415] Cyber charter enrollment numbers obtained from Public School Enrollment Reports; retrieved July 28, 2014; http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/enrollment/7407/public_school_enrollment_reports/620541
[416] 2013 Cyber Charter School Application Decisions; retrieved August 8, 2014; http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/charter_schools/7356/2013_cyber_charter_school_application_decisions/1704290

blended courses (although some offer a fully online option); do not require permission to operate; and do not require separate reporting as they simply roll into overall district accountability. As a result, the total number of district and IU online academies and online service programs is unknown.

Blended Schools Network (BSN) works with many school districts in the state (169 out of 500 school districts as of SY 2012–13), providing a range of supplemental, blended, and technology-enhanced programs. The Pennsylvania Hybrid Learning Institute (PA HLI) is an independent group of educators advocating for the adoption of blended learning in Pennsylvania schools; it currently supports 70 schools. Supported by ARIN Intermediate Unit 28 (Regional Education Service Agency), several elementary schools working with PA HLI have piloted blended math programs for 2nd and 3rd graders.

State policies and accountability

With the passage of Act 88 (2002), the General Assembly allowed for the establishment of cyber charter schools in Pennsylvania.[417] Oversight is regulated by the charter school law that oversees 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 the Pennsylvania Department of Education (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.

In addition to reviewing each cyber charter's annual report, the PDE must annually[418] review a cyber charter school's performance on state assessment tests, standardized tests, and other performance indicators to ensure compliance with federal and state academic standards. In addition, it must assess whether a cyber charter school is meeting the goals of its charter and is in compliance with its charter. Additional details about charter authorization, reporting, funding, and requirements can be found at www.kpk12.com/states/.

In July 2013 the PDE released new guidance to cyber charter applicants and operators relating to the requirements for online course delivery.[419] It stated that cyber charters must "offer a structured education program in which the school utilizes technology in order to provide a significant portion of its curriculum and instruction through the Internet or other electronic means without a school-established requirement that the student be present at a supervised physical facility designated by the school, except on a very limited basis, such as for standardized tests."

Current policy requires school districts to pay tuition to cyber and other charter schools based on per-pupil expenses in the student's resident district, a figure that may vary up to $10,000 between students (and averaged $12,657 in SY 2012–13).[420] Cyber and charter school reform bills were introduced periodically during the 2013–14 and 2014–15 legislative sessions, mainly targeting cost-reduction measures for districts, but as of summer 2014, there have been no further changes to the funding of cyber school students.

In August 2013, the PDE received waivers from certain requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), which includes an allowance to use alternative accountability standards and designations to define achievement (ESEA Flexibility Waiver). All LEAs now receive a School Performance Profile (SPP) score based on 100 points, which details student performance through scoring of multiple measures that define achievement. Since SY 2013–14 PDE has incorporated the SPP score into its state-based cyber charter review process, to ensure uniformity in the review of whether a cyber charter school is meeting the goals of and is in compliance with its charter, and to evaluate the cyber charter school's performance on state assessments and other performance indicators.

[417] Act 88 (2002); retrieved June 27, 2014; http://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/legis/li/uconsCheck.cfm?yr=2002&sessInd=0&act=88

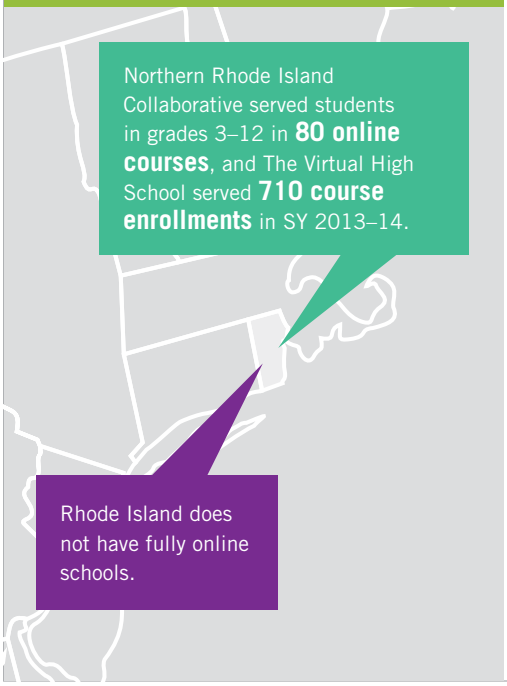
[418] Personal communication with Department of Education, June 25, 2014 and August 12, 2014

[419] Cyber Charter School Operations and Proper Use of Physical Facilities (BEC 24 P.S. §§ 17-1741-A – 17-1751-A); retrieved June 28, 2014; http://www.education.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/basic_education_circulars/7497

[420] Auditor General's reports: Charter and Cyber Charter Education Funding Reform Should Save Taxpayers $365 Million Annually (2013); retrieved June 28, 2014; http://www.auditorgen.state.pa.us/department/press/cybercharterspecialreport201206.pdf; and Pennsylvania Charter School Accountability and Transparency: Time for a Tune-Up (2014); retrieved August 8, 2014; http://www.auditorgen.state.pa.us/Reports/school/csr/Charter_Report_051214_FINAL.pdf

Rhode Island

DIGITAL LEARNING STATE SNAPSHOT



Availability of online learning options

SUPPLEMENTAL			FULLY ONLINE		
K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)	K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)
NONE	NONE	SOME	NONE	NONE	NONE

Availability of info:
Great
Good
Fair
Poor
Minimal

Does this state have…	Y	N
Student choice for publicly funded fully online schools?		●
Student choice for publicly funded supplemental online courses?		●
SVS or another publicly funded option for private / homeschool students?		●
Prior public school attendance requirement for online schools?		●
Online caps by class, school, district, or statewide?		●
PD requirement for online teachers?		●
State approval process for online providers?		●
State approval process for online courses?		●
Online learning requirement for students?		●
End-of-course exams?		●
Separate state reporting of online course enrollments?		●

There is little fully online learning activity in Rhode Island, but increasing blended learning activity (with a 72% increase in blended learning over the past three years).[421] The Northern Rhode Island Collaborative, in association with the Virtual Learning Academy of the Jefferson County Educational Service Center in Ohio, offers 80 online courses to students in grades 3–12 paid for by school districts. The Virtual High School reported 710 course enrollments from 24 Rhode Island middle and high schools[422] in SY 2013–14.

A variety of organizations are supporting the expansion of blended learning at the state level. The Highlander Institute has been a leader in supporting Rhode Island educators implementing blended learning in their classrooms and schools, organizing an annual conference for teachers and administrators, offering workshops, and making resources available online. It is also working with The Learning Accelerator to create a five-year strategic plan for implementing blended learning statewide, and to launch FuseRI, which is a way for districts to share, implement, and evaluate blended learning in schools across the state.[423] Their goal is to make Rhode Island the first fully blended learning state.

There are several blended learning initiatives across the state. The Village Green Virtual Public Charter High School and Sheila C. "Skip" Nowell Leadership Academy opened in fall 2013 and are fully blended charter schools. Pleasant View Elementary School in Providence implemented a blended learning model for its 460

[421] Rhode Island Virtual Learning Annual Legislative Report January 2014; retrieved August 11, 2014; http://www.ride.ri.gov/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/Students-and-Families-Great-Schools/Educational-Programming/Virtual-Learning/VLReports/VL_Annual_Report_2014-Final.pdf
[422] The Virtual High School; retrieved July 21, 2014; http://www.govhs.org/Pages/AboutUs-ParticipatingSchools
[423] The Highlander Institute FuseRI; retrieved August 11, 2014; http://www.highlanderinstitute.org/fuseri/

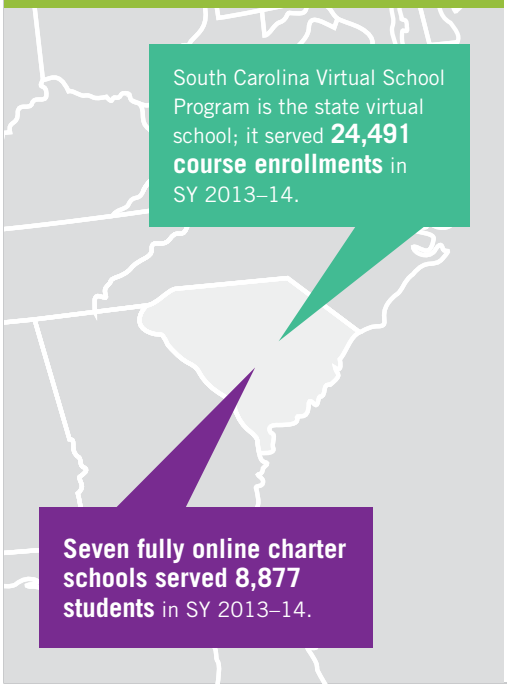
K–8 students SY 2012–13, and Wakefield Hills Elementary followed as the second Rhode Island Model School grant recipient in SY 2013–14. Blackstone Valley Prep Mayoral Academy received a $450,000 Next Generation Learning Challenges grant to open a blended learning high school in fall 2014. Providence Career and Technical Academy offers about 500 high school students a career and technical education in a blended environment. In addition, the Highlander Institute launched the Highlander Charter School in SY 2001–02, which serves about 350 students in grades K–9 with a blended education. In keeping with its mission to expand blended learning statewide, it shares its best practices and was recognized by the Rhode Island department of education as a leading school.

The Statewide Virtual Education Act (S2276, 2012)[424] formalized virtual learning regulations and definitions, and instructed the commissioner of education to develop guidelines for virtual education, including specifics on an annual virtual learning report to be delivered to the legislature. It also "ensures 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 allowed teachers outside of Rhode Island to teach virtual courses to Rhode Island students.

[424] S2276 The Statewide Virtual Education Act (2012); retrieved July 21, 2014; http://www.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText12/SenateText12/S2276Aaa.pdf

South Carolina

DIGITAL LEARNING STATE SNAPSHOT



Availability of online learning options

SUPPLEMENTAL			FULLY ONLINE		
K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)	K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)
NONE	SOME	MOST	ALL	ALL	ALL

Availability of info: **Great** / Good / Fair / Poor / Minimal

Does this state have…

	Y	N
Student choice for publicly funded fully online schools?	●	
Student choice for publicly funded supplemental online courses?		●
SVS or another publicly funded option for private / homeschool students?	●	
Prior public school attendance requirement for online schools?		●
Online caps by class, school, district, or statewide?		●
PD requirement for online teachers?		●
State approval process for online providers?	●	
State approval process for online courses?	●	
Online learning requirement for students?		●
End-of-course exams?	●	
Separate state reporting of online course enrollments?	●	

SCVSP is available to all students under age 21, including private and homeschooled students.

Multiple offices, including SCVSP, review providers.

All virtual courses go through an SC DOE approval process.

In 4 subjects.

SCVSP is required to submit an annual report to the state legislature and the Education Oversight Committee.

South Carolina has a state virtual school (the South Carolina Virtual School Program, SCVSP), seven online charter schools, and several district programs. SCVSP served 24,491[425] course enrollments in SY 2013–14, a 46% annual increase. In SY 2014–15, SCVSP expanded its reach by approving a franchise, the Aiken County Cyber Academy (ACVA), to open in Aiken County School District. ACVA will offer open enrollment to students who want to supplement their traditional schedule with SCVSP courses. ACVA will be a locally controlled district program and will use Aiken County teachers.

SCVSP was established by Act 26 (2007),[426] and expanded with the passage of H3752[427] in 2013. H3752 lifted the cap of three online credits allowed per student per year, allowed students in grades 8–12 (expanded to 6–12 for SY 2014–15) to take unlimited courses via SCVSP, and expanded course listings to include more electives and AP courses. SCVSP is available to all students under age 21, including adult education, private school, and homeschooled students. It had a budget of $2.5 million in SY 2013–14. For $3,500 per course, SCVSP offers a curriculum and certified teacher to schools that need an in-demand course or a teacher in a particular area.

Seven fully online charter schools enrolled 8,877 students in SY 2013–14, a 9% annual increase.[428] A few districts offer online programs to their own students, although some only offer summer school. Horry County School District is implementing a district-wide Personalized Digital Learning initiative in its middle and high

[425] SCVSP enrollment number provided by DOE as of June 30, 2014
[426] Act 26 (2007) and H3097; retrieved June 29, 2014; http://www.scstatehouse.gov/sess117_2007-2008/bills/3097.htm
[427] H3752 (2013); retrieved June 29, 2014; http://www.scstatehouse.gov/sess120_2013-2014/bills/3752.htm
[428] Active Student Head Count; retrieved July 2, 2014; http://www.ed.sc.gov/data/student-counts/Student_Headcounts/ActiveStudentHeadcounts.cfm

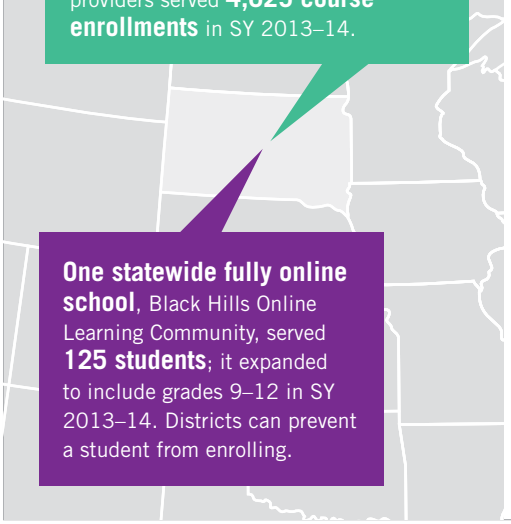
schools, with plans to expand to its elementary schools. One of its schools, Whittemore Park Middle School, launched a 1:1, blended learning, competency-based initiative supported in part by a Next Generation Learning Challenges grant. South Carolina Science Academy is a blended school that opened in SY 2013–14 and serves grades 6–8. Additional details about digital options can be found at www.kpk12.com/states.

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.

South Dakota

DIGITAL LEARNING STATE SNAPSHOT

South Dakota Virtual School is a consortium of course providers approved by the state department of education; providers served **4,029 course enrollments** in SY 2013–14.



One statewide fully online school, Black Hills Online Learning Community, served **125 students**; it expanded to include grades 9–12 in SY 2013–14. Districts can prevent a student from enrolling.

Availability of online learning options

SUPPLEMENTAL			FULLY ONLINE		
K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)	K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)
NONE	SOME	MOST	NONE	NONE	NONE

Availability of info: **Great** / Good / Fair / Poor / Minimal

Does this state have…

	Y	N
Student choice for publicly funded fully online schools?		●
Student choice for publicly funded supplemental online courses?		●
SVS or another publicly funded option for private / homeschool students?		●
Prior public school attendance requirement for online schools?		●
Online caps by class, school, district, or statewide?		●
PD requirement for online teachers?		●
State approval process for online providers?	●	
State approval process for online courses?	●	
Online learning requirement for students?		●
End-of-course exams?	●	
Separate state reporting of online course enrollments?		●

Districts can refuse a student's request to enroll.

HB1113 (2007) restricted districts from putting a grade on a student transcript unless the course is from an approved provider.

All courses listed with SDVS are required to be approved.

In 12 subjects.

The South Dakota Virtual School (SDVS), a consortium of approved distance education providers managed from within the South Dakota Department of Education (SDDOE), is the main online learning option for students. SDVS served 4,029 course enrollments in SY 2013–14, a slight decrease from the previous year.

The SDVS was created by HB1236 (2006)[429] and launched in 2007. HB1113 (2007)[430] restricted districts from putting a grade on a student transcript unless the course is offered through the SDVS. However, SB182 (2014)[431] modifies that requirement to allow school districts to grant credit for a distance learning courses offered through an entity other than SDVS if:

> "(1) The course is provided through an agreement through accredited school districts;
>
> (2) The course is a university or postsecondary technical institute course taken by a student who is dually enrolled …;
>
> (3) The course was previously taken through an accredited high school or other accredited provider by a student who subsequently transferred into the school district; or
>
> (4) The course is not available through the SDVS and is pre-approved by the secretary of education."

[429] HB1236 (2006); retrieved August 9, 2014; http://legis.sd.gov/sessions/2006/bills/HB1236SED.htm
[430] HB1113 (2007); retrieved August 9, 2014; http://legis.sd.gov/sessions/2007/bills/HB1113HED.htm
[431] SB182 (2014); retrieved July 20, 2014; http://legis.sd.gov/Legislative_Session/Bills/Bill.aspx?File=SB182ENR.htm&Session=2014

The SDVS acts as a clearinghouse: Providers set course fees and are paid directly by school districts, which have the right to refuse students' requests for an online course. The SDDOE approves all distance learning providers (DLP)[432] and their courses for inclusion in the SDVS. As of July 2014, more than 490 courses have been approved. 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, which effectively limits any other programs from operating statewide.

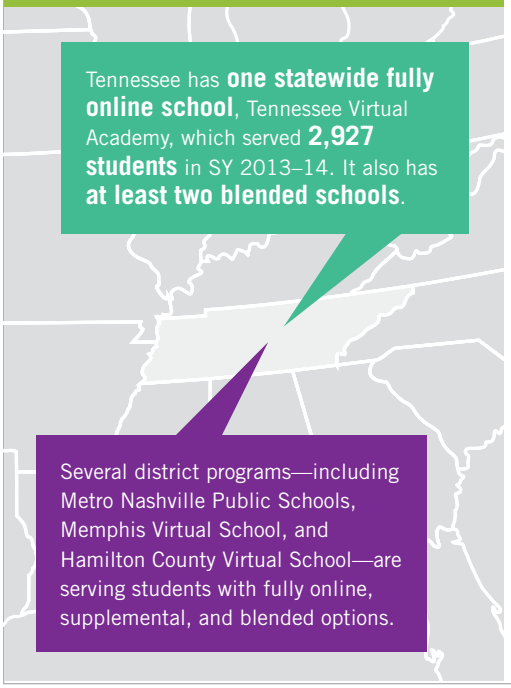
SB182 (2014) approves dual credit opportunities (online and face-to-face) for students in grade 9–12 beginning with SY 2014–15. Students are responsible for covering the cost of $40 dollars per credit. In SY 2014–15, SDVS is also be offering a college and career readiness program for students with gaps in their ACT test scores.[433] The students must register at their local schools; the courses cost $125–$175 and may be paid for by either the student or the district.

The Black Hills Online Learning Community opened a fully online option for K–8 students statewide in SY 2012–13. It expanded to serve grades 9–12 and reported about 125 students in SY 2013–14, and is listed as an SDVS provider. Students can only enroll with the approval of their district. Other approved SDVS providers include Dakota Interactive Academic Link (DIAL) Virtual School; the E-Learning Center, which offers college-prep and AP courses; Learning Power, which offers AP classes; High Plains Alternative School; APEX Mitchell Technical Institute; North Dakota Center for Distance Education; and University of Nebraska High School. In addition, the Sioux Falls School District offers online courses to its students.

[432] SDVS approved providers; retrieved July 20, 2014; http://www.sdvs.k12.sd.us/Students/Providers.aspx
[433] SDVS College Readiness Program; retrieved July 20, 2014; http://sdvs.k12.sd.us/Students/CollegeReadiness.aspx

Tennessee

DIGITAL LEARNING STATE SNAPSHOT



Tennessee has **one statewide fully online school**, Tennessee Virtual Academy, which served **2,927 students** in SY 2013–14. It also has **at least two blended schools**.

Several district programs—including Metro Nashville Public Schools, Memphis Virtual School, and Hamilton County Virtual School—are serving students with fully online, supplemental, and blended options.

Availability of online learning options

SUPPLEMENTAL			FULLY ONLINE		
K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)	K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)
NONE	NONE	NONE	SOME	SOME	NONE

Availability of info:
Great
Good
Fair
Poor
Minimal

Does this state have…

	Y	N
Student choice for publicly funded fully online schools?	●	
Student choice for publicly funded supplemental online courses?		●
SVS or another publicly funded option for private / homeschool students?		●
Prior public school attendance requirement for online schools?		●
Online caps by class, school, district, or statewide?	●	
PD requirement for online teachers?		●
State approval process for online providers?		●
State approval process for online courses?	●	
Online learning requirement for students?		●
End-of-course exams?	●	
Separate state reporting of online course enrollments?		●

New schools limited to 1,500 students and no more than 25% out-of-district students.

Schools may never exceed 5,000 students.

All distance courses must be approved by state Department of Education.

In 7 subjects.

Tennessee has one fully online statewide school and eight district programs serving students with digital options. The first fully online school in the state, Tennessee Virtual Academy, serves grades K–8 and reported 2,927 students in SY 2013–14, a 74% annual increase.[434] There are several district-run programs including Hamilton County Virtual School, Memphis Virtual School, Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools (MNPS) Virtual School, Bradley County Virtual School, and others that are serving their own students with online and blended options. At least two fully blended schools exist in the state, Aspire Public Schools and Gestalt Community Schools. In 2014, sixteen schools in Shelby County School District were approved to implement a one-to-one blended learning pilot program that launched in fall 2014.[435] The implementation provides students in grades K–12 with digital resources to supplement their traditional schooling and start the process of incorporating personalized learning throughout the district. Professional development was provided for teachers and administrators on the devices and blended learning instructional model being used.

[434] Tennessee Department of Education School Report Card 2013; retrieved June 27, 2014; http://www.tn.gov/education/data/download_data.shtml

[435] Shelby County School District blended learning pilots; retrieved August 11, 2014; http://eagenda.mcsk12.net/Agendas/eagenda/Shelby%20County%20Board%20of%20Education%20Business%20Meeting%20on%20May%2027,%202014%20on%20Tuesday,%20May%2027,%202014/E85F1593-98A1-4566-BDCC-6332AD74FE56.pdf

HB1030 (2011),[436] the Virtual Public School Act, allowed online schools. SB157 (2013)[437] put restrictions on new public virtual schools. It states that:

- Initial enrollment is limited to 1,500 students.
- No more than 25% of a virtual school's students may come from outside the LEA.
- No school shall exceed 5,000 students.

Existing virtual public schools may continue to serve students who were enrolled as of January 1, 2013. The first two restrictions will be lifted when a "virtual public school demonstrates student achievement growth at a minimum level of "at expectations" as represented by the Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System." The legislation also states that if a school demonstrates "student achievement growth at a level "significantly below expectations" for two consecutive years … the commissioner shall have the authority to reinstitute the enrollment caps … or direct the LEA to close the school."

According to board of education policy,[438] virtual schools may increase enrollment in online classes by up to 25% over numbers established for brick-and-mortar classes if the school "has a school effect score of three (3) or higher as reported by the Tennessee Department of Education in the prior year."

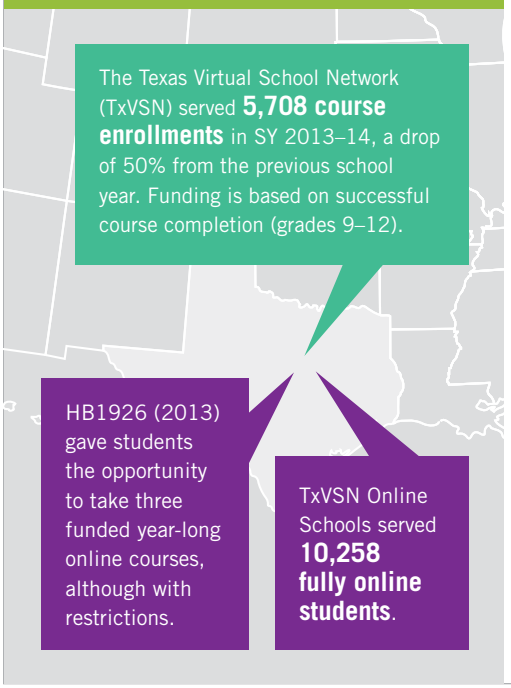
HB3062 (2012)[439] allows students the option to move through a course at their own pace and sets other provisions as follows: "The student shall demonstrate mastery, competency and completion of a course or subject area to be given credit for the course or subject area. If a student successfully completes a course or grade level more than thirty (30) days before the end of the term, the student shall begin work in the next appropriate course or grade."

A state virtual school, the Effective Engaging E-learning Environment for Tennessee (e4TN), was funded through Enhancing Education Through Technology (E2T2) funds, but it lost funding and ceased operations in 2011.

[436] House Bill 1030 (2011); retrieved June 27, 2014; http://www.capitol.tn.gov/Bills/107/Bill/HB1030.pdf
[437] SB157 (2013); retrieved June 27, 2014; http://www.capitol.tn.gov/Bills/108/Bill/SB0157.pdf
[438] State Board of Education Policy on Distance Learning and eLearning T.C.A. § 49-1-104; retrieved June 27, 2014; http://www.tn.gov/sbe/Policies/3.208_Distance_Learning_and_e-Learning.pdf
[439] House Bill 3062 (2012); retrieved June 27, 2014; http://state.tn.us/sos/acts/107/pub/pc0999.pdf

Texas

DIGITAL LEARNING STATE SNAPSHOT



Availability of online learning options

SUPPLEMENTAL			FULLY ONLINE		
K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)	K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)
NONE	SOME	SOME	SOME	MOST	MOST

Availability of info: Great, **Good**, Fair, Poor, Minimal

Does this state have…

	Y	N
Student choice for publicly funded fully online schools?	●	
Student choice for publicly funded supplemental online courses?	●	
SVS or another publicly funded option for private / homeschool students?		●
Prior public school attendance requirement for online schools?	●	
Online caps by class, school, district, or statewide?		●
PD requirement for online teachers?		●
State approval process for online providers?		●
State approval process for online courses?	●	
Online learning requirement for students?		●
End-of-course exams?	●	
Separate state reporting of online course enrollments?		●

In preceding year.

Only for TxVSN teachers.

TxVSN providers must meet eligibility requirements.

All TxVSN courses reviewed for alignment to multiple standards.

Reduced from 15 to 5 with HB 5 (2013).

Most online activity in Texas is through the Texas Virtual School Network (TxVSN), which has two components: a supplemental statewide course catalog of high school courses and the full-time TxVSN Online Schools (OLS) program for grades 3–12. In SY 2013–14 the TxVSN served 5,708 supplemental course enrollments, an annual decrease of 50%, and 10,258 full-time students, an annual increase of 22%. Texas passed legislation effective in SY 2013–14 that gave students the option to take up to three year-long funded TxVSN courses each year, although with restrictions, as well as a bill that expanded existing options for competency-based learning options. Texas also has some districts running online programs including those in Houston, Katy, Plano, and Irving, as well as a consortium of several small rural districts in east Texas known as SUPERNet.

HB1926 (2013)[440] amended the legislation authorizing the TxVSN such that from SY 2013–14 students can take up to three year-long supplemental online courses or the equivalent each year funded by their district or open-enrollment charter school, with restrictions. Courses must be taken as part of the student's normal course load, which is defined as seven credit hours per instructional year; a student may enroll in additional courses but may be required to pay. Districts and open-enrollment charter schools may deny a student's enrollment request if the district or school offers a substantially similar course, and have discretion to select the course provider for the course a student requests. Additional highlights of HB1926 (2013) include:

- Added the option—outside the TxVSN—for a school district or open-enrollment charter school that seeks to inform other districts or schools of the availability of a distance learning course to submit information about the course for publication by the TEA.

[440] HB1926 (2013); retrieved June 13, 2014; http://www.lrl.state.tx.us/scanned/83ccrs/HB1926.PDF

- Prevented the commissioner from adopting rules governing course pricing, allowing price to be determined by the school districts or open-enrollment charter schools involved.
- Added nonprofits and private entities to the list of possible TxVSN course catalog providers. These entities must abide by additional requirements, including providing evidence of prior successful experience offering online courses to middle or high school students by demonstrating student success in course completion and performance. Criteria for these entities will be released in SY 2014–15.
- Included entities that provide professional development courses as eligible TxVSN course providers.
- Required districts and open-enrollment charter schools to send a copy of the written local policy providing students with the opportunity to enroll in TxVSN online courses to parents of every middle and high school student at least once per school year.
- Allowed the TEA to enter into reciprocity agreements with other states to facilitate expedited course approval; courses must be evaluated to ensure compliance with state law and curriculum standards. It also required all course providers to apply for renewed course approval to coincide with revisions to the required curriculum at least every 10 years.
- Prohibited course providers from offering inducements for student enrollment.
- Clarified additional details about each course that must be published on the TxVSN website, including aggregate student performance.[441]
- Directed the commissioner to study the network capabilities of each school district by December 1, 2015.

Texas Administrative Code (TAC) Chapter 70[442] provides the Commissioner's Rules guiding the TxVSN and went into effect in February 2013. It included the following:

- The maximum enrollment cap for fully online schools was removed.
- Eligible districts and open-enrollment charter schools (most districts and schools in the state, based on meeting the required accountability rating) do not need to go through a lengthy application and approval process, but rather can notify TEA annually that they intend to open/operate a virtual school. Three districts opened new TxVSN online schools in fall 2013, per waiver of the commissioner of education, with a fourth planning to begin serving students in fall 2014.[443]

Also passed in 2013, SB1365[444] expanded existing opportunities for students in grades K–12 to earn credit for courses or accelerate on the basis of an examination using one of four exams selected by a school district board of trustees, including AP® exams, those administered through the "College-Level Examination Program," or other exams approved by the local board of trustees. Students who receive credit for the course are not required to take an end-of-course (EOC) exam.

Online programs

Course enrollments have fluctuated significantly since TxVSN launched in January 2009, hitting their peak in SY 2010–11 with 22,910 but then dropping by 76% in SY 2011–12 with the elimination of allotment funding for catalog course fees.[445] Some TxVSN scholarship funds were made available for a limited time from October 2011 through summer 2013 and enrollments increased 102% in SY 2012–13. Enrollments subsequently dropped again by 50% to 5,708 in SY 2013–14.[446] TxVSN OLS is a fully online program for public school students in grades 3–12. Seven schools were authorized by the TEA to offer fully online

[441] Course catalog; retrieved July 30, 2014; https://www.mytxvsn.org/CourseCatalog.aspx. Aggregate student performance is not available as of August 2014.
[442] Texas Administrative Code, Chapter 70; retrieved June 13, 2014; http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/rules/tac/chapter070/ch070aa.html
[443] The waiver is related to a clause in HB1926 that states "districts or open-enrollment charter schools may decline to pay for more than three year-long online courses, or the equivalent, per student each instructional year unless a student was enrolled in a full-time online program that was operating on January 1, 2013."
[444] SB1365 (2013); retrieved June 13, 2014; http://www.legis.state.tx.us/tlodocs/83R/billtext/html/SB01365F.htm
[445] SB1 (2011); retrieved June 13, 2014; http://www.journals.senate.state.tx.us/sjrnl/821/pdf/82S106-28-F.PDF
[446] TxVSN enrollment data for fall 2013/spring 2014/summer 2014; retrieved July 7, 2014; http://www.txvsn.org/custom/rpt_enrollments.aspx

programs through the TxVSN OLS program in SY 2013–14: one charter school and six independent school districts (ISDs). There were 10,258 students served in grades 3–12 in SY 2013–14; a 22% annual increase. Enrollments have grown steadily since maximum enrollment caps were eliminated in 2013. In addition, the TEA has authorized Hallsville ISD to begin serving students through its Virtual High School in SY 2014–15.

One particularly large consortium is SUPERNet, which offers supplemental online courses to students at no cost to 20 rural districts who pay a membership fee; most courses are built by local teachers, and some courses are offered through TxVSN to allow students outside the consortium to enroll in them. SUPERNet served 714 course enrollments in SY 2013–14, a drop of 3% from the previous year; a small percentage of those enrollments may overlap with TxVSN enrollments.

State policies

Outside the TxVSN, districts may use outside providers and courses at their discretion, and must assure that a course meets all the state curriculum requirements in order to award credit.

Funding through the TxVSN: Students participating in online courses or programs offered through the TxVSN are not required to be physically present at school to be eligible to generate Foundation School Program (FSP) funding.

> **Grades 3–8, TxVSN Online Schools:** Students generate state FSP funding based on successful program completion and promotion to the next grade level. Students must demonstrate academic proficiency by earning a minimum passing grade of 70% or above on a 100-point scale, sufficient for promotion to the next grade level. Funding is equivalent to state funding for a student enrolled full time in a traditional classroom. If a student successfully completes their grade-level instructional program and is promoted to the next grade, the school receives full funding; if the student does not, the school receives no funding.
>
> **Grades 9–12, TxVSN catalog and Online Schools:** State funding is generated when a student successfully completes and earns credit for a course, which is defined as having demonstrated academic proficiency by earning a minimum passing grade of 70% or above on a 100-point scale. A student taking one or more courses through the TxVSN catalog may count their participation toward eligibility for part-time or full-time FSP funding, presuming the student successfully completes the course. Districts may not count more than three year-long TxVSN courses, or the equivalent, per student per school year toward FSP funding eligibility. Authorized full-time TxVSN online schools are exempt from this funding limitation. Students enrolled in a TxVSN online school are funded at one of three levels: if the student completes at least five credits, the school receives full funding; if the student completes at least three credits, the school receives partial funding; and if the student completes fewer than three credits, the school receives no funding.
>
> No funding is provided for students who register for a TxVSN course but are not enrolled in a Texas school district or open-enrollment charter school (other than students in foster care or certain dependents of military personnel).

Funding outside the TxVSN: For districts to receive state funding for online courses outside the TxVSN, students must be physically in attendance at school and meet the normal attendance accounting rules of the state. A student may generate either part-time or full-time FSP funding.

TxVSN course providers offer courses and are responsible for instruction. Receiver districts (student's home district) approve their students' TxVSN course requests (and have the ability to deny those course requests as per HB1926), provide ongoing support to local students enrolled in TxVSN courses, and award credits and diplomas. Districts and open-enrollment charter schools serving as TxVSN course providers may seek a waiver from the TxVSN course review and approval process administered by the TEA, but they must certify that the district or charter has verified that each course meets 100% of all TxVSN course standards. As of July 2014 no districts or charter schools have yet applied.

Utah

DIGITAL LEARNING STATE SNAPSHOT

Utah is a course choice state, allowing students to select online courses from multiple providers and have the funding follow the student at the course level. The course choice program (SOEP) served **3,208 course enrollments** in SY 2013–14.

The Electronic High School served **4,741 course enrollments** in SY 2013–14, an annual decrease of 54% due to funding cuts.

Four fully online schools served **3,491 students** in SY 2013–14.

Availability of online learning options

SUPPLEMENTAL			FULLY ONLINE		
K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)	K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)
SOME	SOME	MOST	ALL	ALL	ALL

Availability of info: **Great** Good Fair Poor Minimal

Does this state have…	Y	N	
Student choice for publicly funded fully online schools?	●		*Through Statewide Online Education Program (SOEP).*
Student choice for publicly funded supplemental online courses?	●		
SVS or another publicly funded option for private / homeschool students?	●		*Access via SOEP, funded by appropriation.*
Prior public school attendance requirement for online schools?		●	
Online caps by class, school, district, or statewide?		●	*Provider approval process to participate in SOEP.*
PD requirement for online teachers?		●	
State approval process for online providers?		●	
State approval process for online courses?		●	*In 3 subjects.*
Online learning requirement for students?		●	
End-of-course exams?	●		*A required element of state reporting, though not yet fully implemented.*
Separate state reporting of online course enrollments?	●		

Utah has a state virtual school (the Utah Electronic High School) serving 4,817 students, four statewide fully online charter schools serving 3,491 students, and many districts offering online courses via the Statewide Online Education Program[447] (SOEP) and other providers. SOEP is among the first and best-known course choice programs in the country, but the program is still quite small (though growing), serving 3,208 course enrollments (or 6,416 quarter credits) in SY 2013–14. This is an increase of 151% from the previous year. For SY 2014–15, students in grades 9–12 may enroll in up to four credits online per year. SOEP opened up to private and homeschooled students in SY 2014–15, and as of August 2014 these comprised 50% of student enrollments.[448]

SB65 creating the SOEP[449] was signed into law on March 30, 2011, and was amended with SB178 in July 2012. The program states that students and parents, including homeschooled and private students, can choose online courses and providers to supplement a brick-and-mortar education as long as the course aligns with the student's Student Education Occupation Plan or Individualized Education Program (IEP). Subject mastery replaces seat time, allowing students to advance based on competency. Through SOEP, students may enroll in four online credits in SY 2014–15, five in SY 2015–16, and six in SY 2016–17. The number of unique students served in the SOEP increased from 664 in SY 2012–13 to 1,262 in SY 2013–14, a 90% increase.

Funding based on a statutory schedule of content-specific fees follows the student down to the course level provider. Full funding is based upon successful completion within one year for a 1.0 credit course and nine weeks past the end of the semester for a .5 credit course. The provider receives 50% (25% per .5 credit) after the withdrawal period and 50% upon credit earned. To encourage providers to provide remediation

[447] Statewide Online Education Program; retrieved July 3, 2014; http://schools.utah.gov/edonline/
[448] Personal communication, SOEP Specialist, August 4, 2014. Final SY 2012–13 enrollments changed after publication of *Keeping Pace 2013*.
[449] SB65 (2011); retrieved July 3, 2014; http://le.utah.gov/~2011/bills/sbillint/sb0065s01.htm

(and avoid the need for credit recovery), a provider receives part of the final payment if the student completes the course after the allowable time periods, but before the student graduates. Students may generate no more than 1.0 FTE, unless they have an approved plan for early graduation.

Private and homeschooled students began enrolling in SOEP in SY 2014–15 under 53A-15-1202 (2012) with a different funding stream than public school students.[450] With HB3 (2014), $300,000 was allocated for SY 2013–14, with $500,000 given as an ongoing yearly amount from SY 2014–15.[451] This is separate from the $250,000 ongoing allocation for program administration by the Utah State Office of Education (USOE).

There were 14 approved providers as of August 2014.[452] Any LEA—charter or district—can apply to be an online provider. Providers may not limit class sizes. Open-entry, open-exit online courses are permitted. Each provider administers state assessments; the state is required to make assessments available upon course completion. The state board of education must produce an annual report on the performance of online providers. The SY 2012–13 Performance Audit detected several areas of concern, and concluded that "approved policies and procedures that specifically address distance and online education programs at the LEA level need to be developed and documented."[453] A SY 2013–14 report is scheduled for publication in October 2014.

In 2013, SB82 introduced a statewide "Student Achievement Backpack," an online portfolio of student data.[454] SB82 provides that from SY 2014–15, students, parents, and LEAs may access student data including demographics, course grades, course history, and results for assessments administered under the Utah Performance Assessment System (U-PASS).

Four statewide online charter schools served 3,491 students in SY 2013–14, a 14% annual increase. Utah Virtual Academy served 1,956 K–12 students in SY 2013–14, a 5% annual decrease. Mountain Heights Academy, formally the Open High School of Utah, enrolled 389 students in SY 2013–14, a 16% annual increase. (Mountain Heights is the only school in the country whose course materials are based entirely on open educational resources.) Utah Connections Academy reported 689 enrollments, a 53% increase, and Alianza Academy reported 457 enrollments in SY 2013–14, a decrease of 9%.

The Utah Electronic High School (EHS), the state virtual school, is primarily a supplemental program. EHS started in 1994 as a statewide virtual school hosted and funded by the USOE. During SY 2013–14, EHS granted 9,482 quarter credits to 4,817 individual students (the equivalent of 4,741 individual semester course completions), a 54% decrease from the previous year.[455] It is also 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 and are designed to be competency-based, with no specific student seat-time requirement. Rule R277-725 (2014)[456] prescribes that from SY 2014–15, it is expected that "In a student's first week of enrollment in a course, a student shall be assigned to a cohort group with the expectation of class completion within seven to ten weeks." Annual line item funding, which began in 2001, was $2 million each school year from 2007 through 2012, $1 million for SY 2012–13, and $900,000 for SY 2013–14. Funding cuts have resulted in reductions to both course enrollments and the number of courses available to students.

Brigham Young University (BYU) runs the BYU Independent Study program, in which high school students may enroll. Credits earned through BYU Independent Study can transfer to other educational institutions outside of Utah that are accredited by the Northwest Association of Accredited Schools. The National Collegiate Athletic Association accepts credits from its high school elective courses, but does not accept credits for its core courses.[457]

[450] Rule 53A-15-1202; retrieved July 3, 2014, http://le.utah.gov/code/TITLE53A/htm/53A15_120200.htm
[451] HB3 (2014); retrieved August 5, 2014; http://le.utah.gov/~2014/bills/static/HB0003.html
[452] Statewide Online Education Program provider list; retrieved July 19, 2014; http://schools.utah.gov/edonline/Students-and-Parents/Courses.aspx
[453] Performance Audit 2013-02; retrieved July 29, 2014, http://www.schools.utah.gov/internalaudit/Public-Record-Reports/PRR2013/2013-2DistanceOnlineEducationProgramsUtah.aspx
[454] SB82 (2013); retrieved August 10, 2014; http://le.utah.gov/~2013/bills/static/sb0082.html
[455] Personal communication, Principal, EHS, August 13, 2014
[456] Utah Administrative Code Rule R277-725; retrieved July 2014; http://www.rules.utah.gov/publicat/code/r277/r277-725.htm
[457] NCAA eligibility; retrieved July 19, 2014; http://is.byu.edu/site/courses/ncaa.cfm

Vermont

DIGITAL LEARNING STATE SNAPSHOT

VTVLC reported **3,087 enrollments** including enrollments from partner schools and supported schools (course leasing, learning recovery, algebra-readiness program).

There are no dedicated fully online schools in Vermont, although VTVLC served **10 fully online students** in SY 2013–14.

Availability of online learning options

SUPPLEMENTAL			FULLY ONLINE		
K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)	K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)
NONE	SOME	SOME	NONE	NONE	NONE

Availability of info: **Great** Good Fair Poor Minimal

Does this state have…	Y	N
Student choice for publicly funded fully online schools?		●
Student choice for publicly funded supplemental online courses?		●
SVS or another publicly funded option for private / homeschool students?		●
Prior public school attendance requirement for online schools?		●
Online caps by class, school, district, or statewide?		●
PD requirement for online teachers?	●	
State approval process for online providers?	●	
State approval process for online courses?		●
Online learning requirement for students?		●
End-of-course exams?		●
Separate state reporting of online course enrollments?		●

Limited opportunity for funded seats.

25 tuition-free VTVLC seats per partner school per teacher employed.

VT has an Online Teaching Specialist teaching endorsement that is required by fall 2015.

For fully online schools.

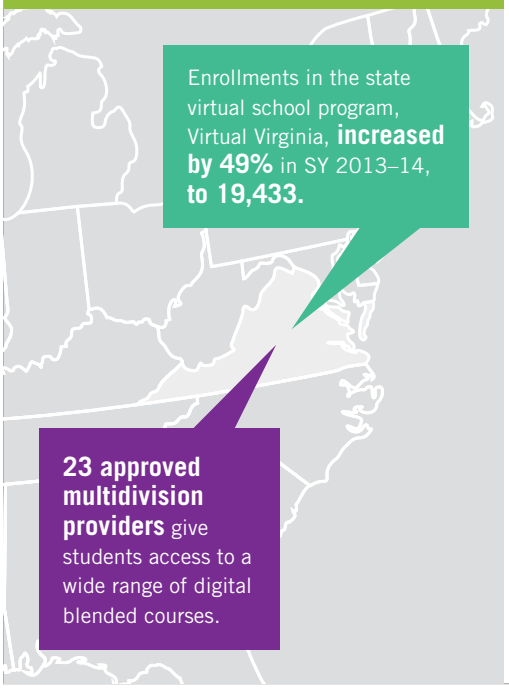
The Vermont Virtual Learning Cooperative (VTVLC) is the state virtual school; in SY 2013–14 it supported 70% of the state's high schools. The Virtual High School (VHS) delivered online classes to 755 students in 28 high schools (44% of high schools) in SY 2013–14. There are no major district online programs and no fully online schools. VTVLC is run by the Vermont Agency of Education and is managed by a consortium of schools. It served 2,707 course enrollments in 89 courses to 35 partner schools in SY 2013–14, an annual increase of 188%. This includes course leasing (Hybrid Hosting), learning recovery (credit recovery), and 532 enrollments served through an algebra pre-readiness program. VTVLC also supported 380 enrollments at supported schools, which receive courses and/or professional development to support blended classrooms. Ten students completed all coursework online through VTVLC while enrolled in their local school in SY 2013–14. VTVLC receives about $100,000 annually from the state, and partner schools pay an annual fee of $4,250 for the first teacher and $1,350 for each additional teacher. For each teacher allocated by the partner school to facilitate a VTVLC class, the school may enroll up to 25 students tuition free. Non-partner schools (in- and out-of-state) access courses on a space-available basis for $350 per half credit. A partnership with the Community College of Vermont expanded in SY 2012–13 to allow 11th and 12th graders to take dual enrollment courses.

The Flexible Pathways Initiative (Act 77, 2013)[458] encourages districts to create a personalized learning plan for every student in grades 7–12, and defines virtual and blended learning as alternative pathways to graduation. A 2014 memorandum, "Policy Guidance on Home Study Students Requesting Virtual Learning Opportunities from their Home District,"[459] builds on the virtual and blended definitions in Act 77. It recommended non-partner schools cover access for VTVLC courses for home study students living in the school region (traditional students will still pay tuition). When a non-partner school covers access for a home study student, the school will count the student in its ADM.

[458] Act 77; retrieved June 30, 2014; http://www.leg.state.vt.us/docs/2014/Acts/ACT077.pdf
[459] April 2014 memo; retrieved June 30, 2014; http://education.vermont.gov/documents/EDU-Memo_Policy_guidance-home-study-virtual-learning.pdf

Virginia

DIGITAL LEARNING STATE SNAPSHOT



Availability of online learning options

SUPPLEMENTAL			FULLY ONLINE		
K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)	K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)
SOME	MOST	MOST	NONE	NONE	NONE

Availability of info: Great **Good** Fair Poor Minimal

Does this state have…

	Y	N
Student choice for publicly funded fully online schools?	●	
Student choice for publicly funded supplemental online courses?		●
SVS or another publicly funded option for private / homeschool students?		●
Prior public school attendance requirement for online schools?		●
Online caps by class, school, district, or statewide?		●
PD requirement for online teachers?	●	
State approval process for online providers?		●
State approval process for online courses?		●
Online learning requirement for students?	●	
End-of-course exams?	●	
Separate state reporting of online course enrollments?	●	

BOE developing requirements for online teachers and administrators.

Only "multidivision" providers must be approved and accredited.

One course between grades 9 and 12.

In 6 subjects.

Virginia's state virtual school program, Virtual Virginia (VVa), reported a 49% increase in student enrollments in SY 2013–14, to 19,433. Single-district supplemental programs operated as well in counties including Fairfax, Chesterfield, York, Carroll, and Henrico. In addition, state-authorized providers may serve students statewide in grades K–12 with fully online, supplemental, and blended programs through partnerships with local school boards, but no fully online statewide schools exist. There were an additional 4,361 unique student enrollments reported by multidivision providers for SY 2013–14.[460] An online course graduation requirement went into effect in SY 2013–14 for the graduating class of 2017.[461]

State policies

SB738 (2010)[462] allowed local school boards to contract with approved multidivision online providers to provide out-of-district online learning programs to students in grades K–12. There are 23 approved providers as of August 2014, including York County and Chesterfield County Public Schools.[463] Local school division programs or consortia of division online programs in which "fewer than 10 per cent of the students enrolled reside outside the geographical boundaries of the school division" need not participate in the approval process.

SB738 did not provide additional funding for districts to cover the cost of students enrolling in online courses, nor did the legislation establish a uniform per-student cost, per-course cost, or funding formula. Instead, a

[460] Personal communication with Cheri Kelleher, Program Coordinator, Virtual Virginia, Virginia Department of Education, July 16, 2014
[461] Chapter 642 22.1-253.13:4; retrieved July 16, 2014; http://leg1.state.va.us/cgi-bin/legp504.exe?121+ful+CHAP0642
[462] SB738 (2010); retrieved July 16, 2014; http://leg1.state.va.us/cgi-bin/legp504.exe?101+sum+SB738
[463] Approved multidivision providers; retrieved July 16, 2014; https://p1pe.doe.virginia.gov/amop_public/

student's local education agency (LEA) or school must contract with each approved multidivision provider separately (this may or may not include an additional course-level approval process on a per-student basis), and the state reimburses the enrolling school division at that division's state funding level (which averages $4,400 per FTE annually, but varies). Only students enrolling in out-of-district courses through approved providers are assured full per-pupil funding by the state.

H1115 (2014)[464] amends and reauthorizes previous VVa legislation requiring the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) to establish a Virtual Learning Advisory Committee to advise the VDOE on online courses, professional development, and digital instruction resources that school divisions require to meet the Commonwealth's graduation requirements; and to advise on strategic planning to expand digital learning opportunities statewide. It also permits the VDOE to contract with local school boards to make their online courses available to other school divisions (districts) through VVa. The divisions may charge the student's resident division a per-student or per-course fee, subject to board of education approval. The bill additionally permits the VDOE to charge an application fee to divisions and multidivision online providers requesting to offer a course through VVa.[465]

H1086 (Chapter 442, 2014)[466] clarifies funding for special education students enrolled in fully online programs in other school districts, releasing the resident district from the obligation to provide special education services, and requiring transfer of state and federal funds to the division providing educational services.

The "Virginia e-Learning Backpack Initiative" (2013) is designed to supplement the costs of providing tablets and content to lower-performing schools. The E-Learning Backpack is funded through supplemental grants as part of the Virginia Public School Authority Educational Technology Notes Program, and provides $400 per student in grade 9 towards tablet purchase, and an additional $2,400 for content creation packages for teachers. Schools with a 9th grade that administered Standards of Learning tests in spring 2013 that are not fully accredited (based on Virginia's school accreditation ratings in effect for SY 2013–14) qualify to participate in the program.[467]

Digital programs

Virtual Virginia (VVa), the state virtual school program operated out of the VDOE, has been open since 2005. VVa course enrollments increased in SY 2013–14 from 13,026 to 19,433, an increase of 49%, after doubling enrollments the previous year. Recent growth is attributed to enrollment in a single new course that supports school compliance with 2010 legislation requiring that all students complete an economics and personal finance course before graduation (an online version was developed with VDOE). VVA funding is based almost entirely on state appropriations. Virginia public school students may take as many courses as their districts and schools will permit (up to seven). Most students enroll in AP® courses tuition-free through participation in the VDOE Early College Scholar program; otherwise a per-course fee is charged to districts (based upon the local composite index of each district's ability to pay).

Prior to SB738, K12 Inc. was one of the first providers to open a statewide fully online school, Virginia Virtual Academy (VAVA). As of August 2014, it serves students in grades K–6 in King and Queen County and Patrick County school districts; out-of-district students must pay a registration fee, and there are limited seats available. VAVA served 427 students in SY 2013–14.[468] Virginia has a charter school law and several charter schools in operation, but there are no fully online charter schools and no other fully virtual schools have been authorized.

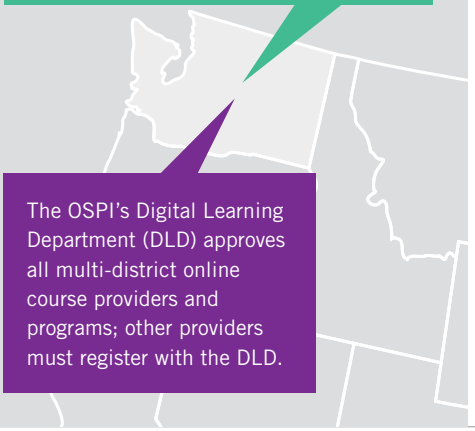
A significant number of supplemental district and regional online programs also exist, both within the approved multidivision provider framework and independently.

[464] Chapter 436 (HB 1115, 2014); retrieved July 16, 2014, http://leg1.state.va.us/cgi-bin/legp504.exe?141+ful+CHAP0436
[465] H1115 Virtual Virginia; retrieved July 16, 2014; http://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?141+sum+HB1115
[466] H1086 (Chapter 433); retrieved July 16, 2014; https://leg1.state.va.us/cgi-bin/legp504.exe?141+ful+CHAP0433
[467] Superintendent's Memo #145-13; retrieved July 20, 2014; http://www.doe.virginia.gov/administrators/superintendents_memos/2013/145-13.shtml
[468] K12 Inc. Academic Report 2014; retrieved July 16, 2014; http://www.k12.com/Academic-Report-2014

Washington

DIGITAL LEARNING STATE SNAPSHOT

Washington reported **23,466 students enrolled in full- and part-time online programs** in SY 2012–13 (**an estimated 5,200 were fully online**). An annual report provides detailed numbers and analysis.



The OSPI's Digital Learning Department (DLD) approves all multi-district online course providers and programs; other providers must register with the DLD.

Availability of online learning options

SUPPLEMENTAL			FULLY ONLINE		
K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)	K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)
SOME	MOST	MOST	ALL	ALL	ALL

Availability of info: **Great** / Good / Fair / Poor / Minimal

Does this state have…

	Y	N
Student choice for publicly funded fully online schools?		●
Student choice for publicly funded supplemental online courses?		●
SVS or another publicly funded option for private / homeschool students?		●
Prior public school attendance requirement for online schools?		●
Online caps by class, school, district, or statewide?		●
PD requirement for online teachers?		●
State approval process for online providers?	●	
State approval process for online courses?		●
Online learning requirement for students?		●
End-of-course exams?	●	
Separate state reporting of online course enrollments?	●	

Resident and non-resident districts must agree to the transfer.

Funded supplemental courses available from multiple providers if district allows.

In 3 subjects.

Compiled annually from three sources.

Washington has many digital learning options available for students in grades K–12.[469] The state reported 23,466 students enrolled in part- and full-time programs in SY 2012–13 (the most recent year for which data are available), a 17% increase from SY 2011–12, and considerably higher than the 7% growth rate from the previous year. The state served an estimated 5,200 fully online students in SY 2012–13, an annual increase of 2%.[470]

The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction's (OSPI) Digital Learning Department (DLD) approves all multi-district online program providers and multi-district online school programs. Online programs are operated by a mix of districts, private providers, and consortia, some of which offer multiple options to students. There are no virtual charters at present, though Initiative 1240 (2012)[471] allowed for charter schools (the first one opened in SY 2014–15, but it is not virtual). Many districts partner with private providers to operate online schools. As of August 2014 there are 111 approved providers: 19 online course providers, 15 online program providers, 20 multi-district online school programs, and 57 single-district (serving no more than 10% out-of-district students) online school programs.[472]

Digital programs

Extensive information about OSPI-approved providers is available on the DLD website, including teacher-student ratios, course completion rates, and course pass rates.

[469] Based on the definition of the term "online" in Washington legislation, which notes that any course that delivers more than half of its curriculum and instruction online can be considered an online course, some of these courses may include face-to-face components. See Online Courses; http://digitallearning.k12.wa.us/approval/glossary.php#courses.

[470] Washington's method for providing numbers to *Keeping Pace* has changed, resulting in a change to the number reported in 2013 for SY 2011–12. The revised figure is 5,100 fully online students.

[471] Initiative Measure No. 1240; retrieved June 30, 2014; http://sos.wa.gov/_assets/elections/initiatives/FinalText_274.pdf

[472] Approved Providers List; retrieved June 30, 2014; http://digitallearning.k12.wa.us/approval/providers

State-level reporting is collected each year from the monthly Alternative Learning Experiences (ALE) enrollment report, the Comprehensive Education Data and Research System (CEDARS), and the DLD's registration system. Detailed reports are available from SY 2009–10 through SY 2012–13 and provide a detailed portrait of online learning activity in the state. For the fifth consecutive year, the DLD released its Online Learning Annual Report; the January 2014 report analyzes data from SY 2012–13. With this report Washington continues to offer one of best examples of online student data reporting and analysis in the country.[473] The 2014 report notes:

- Students in grades K–12 took a total of 72,203 online courses in SY 2012–13, a 9% increase from 66,048 enrollments in SY 2011–12.
- A total of 227 schools in 130 districts (of 295 statewide) reported at least one online course enrollment, compared to 215 schools in 123 districts during SY 2011–12 (in both cases a 6% increase).
- Of the 23,466 students listed in CEDARS as participating in an online course, 1,771 (8%) were reported as students in special education.
- 81% (19,050) of the online student population, up from 77% in SY 2011–12, are high school students. Of the 4,431 K–8 students, 9% percent of these are K–5 students, who tend to be fully online learning students.
- Ongoing improvements to CEDARS' data collection process may cause jumps in certain types of data from year to year. For example, for SY 2012–13, only 129 students (less than 1%) were reported as being enrolled part-time in a public school district in addition to being homeschooled, compared to 900 (5%) in SY 2011–12. The drop is attributed not to a demographic shift, but rather to a change in how CEDARS tracks part-time homeschooled students: that is, a specific field shifted from allowing "Yes" or "No" responses only to differentiating the percentage of time a student was enrolled in a school district.
- Of the 8,519 ALE students (annual average headcount) reported in "Digital/Online" programs, 15% (1,637) were in grades K–5 while 33% (3,557) were in K–8. It is believed that these figures may over-count the number of students actually taking online courses, as not all the ALE programs that self-designate as "Digital/Online" offer exclusively online courses. As a result K–8 students likely make up between 19% and 33% of online students.

Blended learning programs are not included in state reporting mechanisms, though there are numerous schools and initiatives of note, including one-to-one initiatives and credit retrieval (recovery) at school and district levels. Puget Sound Educational Service District (ESD) is one of seven Race to the Top District Consortium members, and its "BlendEd" project supports the implementation of blended learning initiatives among six schools in three districts (Bethel, Franklin Pierce, and Highline). BlendEd also offers regional symposiums on the topic of personalized instruction and blended learning. Kent School District (KSD) is part of the League of Innovative Schools; its one-to-one initiative dates to a pilot program in 2005. KSD's ongoing projects include laptop distribution, wi-fi kiosk installation in low-income areas (via community partners), courses for parents, and a district-based, open source course management system. Lewis and Clark High School (Vancouver Public Schools) became a "flex academy" in SY 2013–14, offering a flexible one-to-one program as a "program of choice" (magnet) school.

State policies

Washington's online learning policies are found in RCW28A.250.[474] SSB5410 created the DLD within the OSPI and developed initial approval and reporting requirements. Reporting standards requiring districts to designate online courses were included in RCW28A.250.040, and came into effect with SY 2010–11. Districts must have online learning board policies and must accept all online course credits that meet district graduation requirements and are earned from OPSI-approved providers.

[473] Online Learning Annual Report 2012-13; retrieved June 30, 2014; http://www.k12.wa.us/LegisGov/2014documents/OnlineLearningJan2014.pdf
[474] RCW 28A.250; retrieved June 30, 2014; http://apps.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=28A.250

All online multi-district programs must be approved by the DLD, a process which includes review by a team of external reviewers. Single district and affiliate programs must register with the DLD. The DLD also directly offers online courses from approved course providers to districts.[475]

ESHB2065 clarified the statutory definition of "online courses" to specify that at least half of the instruction be provided remotely, via Internet or other computer-based learning. In July 2013, the legislature passed SB5946, which included further changes to the ALE and online learning regulations as follows:[476]

- Modified the definition of an "online course" by adding the requirement that certificated teachers have primary responsibility for students' instructional interactions (to delineate online courses from other remote courses, e.g. "Parent Partnerships").
- Restructured "Alternative Learning Experiences" to define three ALE course types. In addition to online courses, ALE included "remote courses," with in-person instructional contact for less than 20% of total class time, and "site-based courses" with in-person instructional contact for at least 20% of the time.
- Required an audit every two years from SY 2013–14 until SY 2016–17.

Engrossed second substitute HB2337 (2012) provided OSPI with an annual budget of $250,000 to identify existing openly licensed courseware aligned with the Common Core State Standards.[477] These open educational resources (OER) are, through 2018, being placed under an attribution license, registered by Creative Commons (a nonprofit organization with domain expertise in OER), and made available statewide on a designated DLD OER web site.[478]

In November 2012, Washington voters passed Initiative 1240 to support the creation of the first 40 public charter schools. The first charter school is operating in the state as of SY 2014–15, though it is not virtual.

Other relevant state policies prior to 2011 are available at www.kpk12.com/states.

Funding

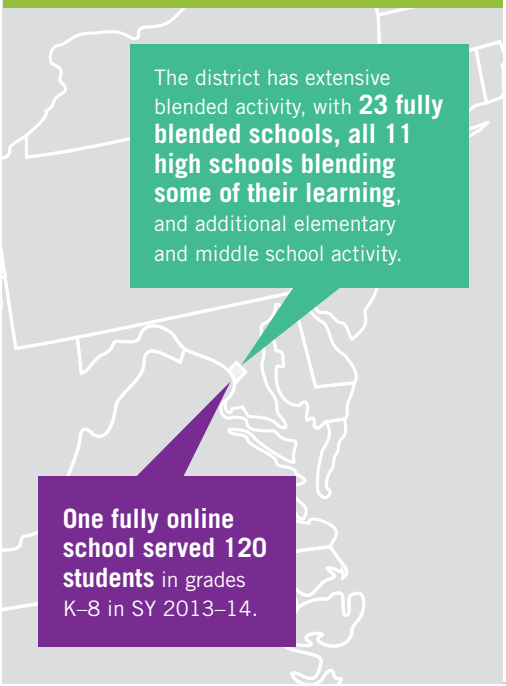
ESHB2065 (2011) led to modification of WAC 392-121-182 by changing the funding of ALE for students (the method through which most online programs operate). It also included new ALE definitions, restrictions on purchasing, and a prohibition against compensating staff as an incentive to increase ALE enrollments.[479] ALE definitions are further clarified by SB5946 (2013). Temporary funding cuts to ALE courses (including online courses) from 2011–2013 have been reverted, and funding is now based on a statewide average ($5,755.84 for SY 2014–15). 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 can also claim funding for online students using either the ALE or basic education funding rules, depending on the circumstances.

Five school districts in Washington State have been awarded a total of $90,000 in Open Educational Resources (OER) grants, as part of a competitive grant program for districts interested in adapting OER materials based on reviewer feedback and/or implementing these materials in the classroom.[480]

[475] RCW 28A.250.020, Multidistrict provider approval process; retrieved June 30, 2014; http://apps.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=28A.250.020
[476] SB5946 (2013); retrieved June 30, 2014; http://apps.leg.wa.gov/billinfo/summary.aspx?bill=5946
[477] Engrossed second substitute HB2337; retrieved June 30, 2014; http://apps.leg.wa.gov/documents/billdocs/2011-12/Pdf/Bills/House%20Passed%20Legislature/2337-S2.PL.pdf
[478] DLD Open Educational Resources; retrieved June 40, 2014; http://digitallearning.k12.wa.us/oer/
[479] Permanent ALE Rules Filed–August 22, 2011; retrieved June 30, 2014; http://digitallearning.k12.wa.us/ale/
[480] DLD OER Grants; retrieved June 30, 2014; http://digitallearning.k12.wa.us/oer/grants.php

Washington, DC

DIGITAL LEARNING STATE SNAPSHOT



Availability of online learning options

SUPPLEMENTAL			FULLY ONLINE		
K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)	K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)
NONE	NONE	NONE	NONE	MOST	MOST

Availability of info: **Great** Good Fair Poor Minimal

Does this state have…	Y	N	
Student choice for publicly funded fully online schools?	●		*1 fully online school.*
Student choice for publicly funded supplemental online courses?		●	
SVS or another publicly funded option for private / homeschool students?		●	
Prior public school attendance requirement for online schools?		●	
Online caps by class, school, district, or statewide?		●	
PD requirement for online teachers?	●		*All blended and online teachers receive 6 hours of PD.*
State approval process for online providers?		●	
State approval process for online courses?		●	
Online learning requirement for students?		●	
End-of-course exams?	●		*Algebra 1.*
Separate state reporting of online course enrollments?		●	

There is a significant amount of digital learning activity in all grades in Washington, DC's single school district. The district supports 23 blended schools, one fully online charter school, and extensive blended learning activity.[481]

- Over 7,000 students, about 10% of the students in the district, are enrolled in 23 blended schools. Non-charter blended schools include five K–5 elementary schools, one middle school with a 1:1 laptop program, and one high school whose freshmen and sophomore classes are blended as of SY 2014–15. In addition, there are 16 blended charter schools, and Rocketship Education has been approved to open two schools in SY 2015–16.
- Online credit recovery classes in all 23 high schools across the district.
- One fully online school: CAPCS Online, a fully online charter school, is one of five campuses authorized by Community Academy Public Charter School. It served about 120 students throughout Washington, DC in grades K–8 in SY 2013–14.
- All 111 schools in the district are blending online content and tools and working with the manager of blended learning in at least some grade levels and/or content areas.

The district is ensuring that students who learn in a blended environment in elementary school continue to learn in a blended environment in middle and high school. Every middle school in the district is using a blended math program, and one school is using an adaptive learning program with 550 students.

[481] Personal communication, John Rice, Manager of Blended Learning, Washington, DC Public Schools, June 27, 2014

The district is expanding its efforts in SY 2014–15, piloting Common Core literacy programs using digital content in more than 40 schools. The district approves all online content providers, making a portfolio of approved providers available on its website through an annual report on blended learning activity in the district.[482]

While the district does not offer supplemental online classes to its students, all 23 high schools offer all core classes in a blended format, primarily to be taken as credit recovery. The curriculum is delivered online, but students may be required to meet with the teacher or attend a class period one or two times a week.

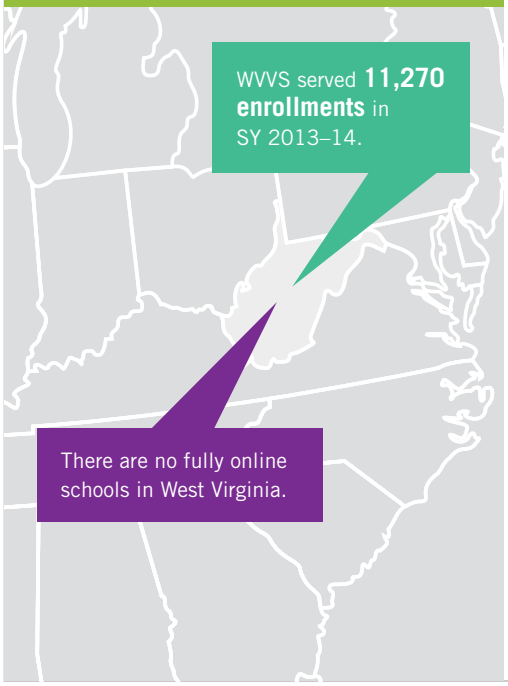
Building on a pilot with five schools in SY 2013–14, about 30 schools will be using digital textbooks in SY 2014–15.

The CityBridge Foundation is a key district partner. In SY 2013–14, it identified 20 Education Innovation Fellows from teachers in the district; they received extensive training and mentoring, and are now working with their principals and the district blended learning office to expand blended learning in their schools. In addition, Next Generation Learning Challenges and CityBridge made $2 million available to public schools in the district, including charter schools that wished to change their instructional models, through the Breakthrough Schools: DC competition.[483] Six initial planning grants of $100,000 were awarded in early 2014, two to public schools and four to charter schools. Those schools will be eligible for up to $450,000 of additional money for school redesign, and new schools are eligible for up to $400,000 for start-up.

[482] An overview of blended learning initiatives in DC Public Schools can be found in *Blended Learning Executive Summary*, released in February 2014 and available at http://dcps.dc.gov/DCPS/Files/downloads/Beyond-the-Classroom/Blended%20Learning%20Executive%20Summary_External.pdf.
[483] Breakthrough Schools: D.C.; retrieved June 27, 2014; http://nextgenlearning.org/breakthrough-schools-dc

West Virginia

DIGITAL LEARNING STATE SNAPSHOT



Availability of online learning options

SUPPLEMENTAL			FULLY ONLINE		
K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)	K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)
NONE	SOME	MOST	NONE	NONE	NONE

Availability of info:
Great
Good
Fair
Poor
Minimal

Does this state have…	Y	N
Student choice for publicly funded fully online schools?		●
Student choice for publicly funded supplemental online courses?		●
SVS or another publicly funded option for private / homeschool students?	●	
Prior public school attendance requirement for online schools?		●
Online caps by class, school, district, or statewide?		●
PD requirement for online teachers?		●
State approval process for online providers?	●	
State approval process for online courses?	●	
Online learning requirement for students?		●
End-of-course exams?		●
Separate state reporting of online course enrollments?		●

Limited funding for homeschooled students.

Providers submit a registration form to WVDE that includes course titles.

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 offer courses to all grade levels. WVVS served 11,270 enrollments in SY 2013–14, an annual increase of 86%, 7,579 of these were through the onTargetWV credit recovery program. WVVS is governed by statute and State Board Policy 2450,[484] and offers about 270 courses via third-party providers, which supply most courses or work with WVVS to develop courses. The WVVS budget, $810,000 for SY 2013–14, is mostly provided by the state and 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 pays $200 per additional student; however, most enrollment fees (other than summer school and credit recovery) were covered by the WVVS appropriation in SY 2013–14. WVVS provides a blended course for Spanish 1A and 1B for students in 7th and 8th grades, and Spanish I and II for grades 9–12. Eight WVVS teachers provide a blended course to students in over 34 schools without world language teachers.

In SY 2014–15, Hancock County School District is launching a pilot program called Hancock County Cyber Academy for students within the school district. The Cyber Academy launched with core courses, and over the following two years will add additional elective course offerings. Some districts such as Kanawha County and Harrison County also have digital programs. West Virginia does not have a charter school law.

[484] Title 126, Legislative Rule, State Board of Education, Series 48, Distance Learning and the West Virginia Virtual School (2450); retrieved July 29, 2013; https://wvde.state.wv.us/policies/p2450.html

In 2014, the Alliance for Excellent Education published a report using Project 24 to review all 55 state districts' readiness to implement digital learning. After each district completed the Digital Learning Readiness Survey, along with surveys completed by administrators and teachers, recommendations were made for the state to consider in advancing digital learning.[485]

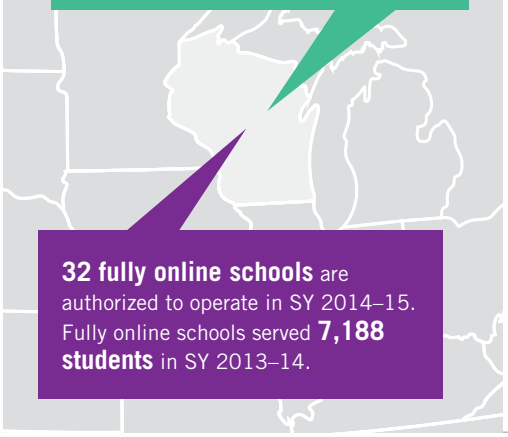
HB 4228[486] (2014) promotes 21st century instruction and learning in public schools by outlining goals for students and teachers to have equitable access and integration of technology into the classroom. This includes providing greater access to advanced and other curricular offerings than could be provided efficiently through traditional on-site delivery formats, including increasing student access to quality distance learning curricula and online distance education tools.

[485] West Virginia Digital Learning Report 2014; retrieved August 5, 2014; http://all4ed.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/WVDigitalLearning.pdf
[486] HB 4228 (2014); retrieved August 7, 2014; http://www.legis.state.wv.us/Bill_Status/bills_text.cfm?billdoc=HB4228%20ENR%20SUB.htm&yr=2014&sesstype=RS&i=4228

Wisconsin

DIGITAL LEARNING STATE SNAPSHOT

The Wisconsin Digital Learning Collaborative is a partnership between Wisconsin Virtual School, the Wisconsin eSchool Network, and DPI, with a combined **20,000 online course enrollments** in SY 2013–14.



32 fully online schools are authorized to operate in SY 2014–15. Fully online schools served **7,188 students** in SY 2013–14.

Availability of online learning options

SUPPLEMENTAL			FULLY ONLINE		
K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)	K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)
NONE	SOME	MOST	ALL	ALL	ALL

Availability of info: **Great** Good Fair Poor Minimal

Does this state have…

	Y	N
Student choice for publicly funded fully online schools?	●	
Student choice for publicly funded supplemental online courses?	●	
SVS or another publicly funded option for private / homeschool students?		●
Prior public school attendance requirement for online schools?		●
Online caps by class, school, district, or statewide?		●
PD requirement for online teachers?		●
State approval process for online providers?		●
State approval process for online courses?		●
Online learning requirement for students?		●
End-of-course exams?		●
Separate state reporting of online course enrollments?		●

32 virtual charter schools operating in SY 2014–15.

Act 20 (2013) defined Course Options program; students may take 2 online courses at a time.

Act 20 (2013) repealed a teacher training requirement.

Wisconsin has a wide range of digital learning options for students across the state.

The Department of Public Instruction (DPI) lists several supplemental online programs, as well as 32 fully online schools authorized to operate in 2014–15.[487] In SY 2013–14, 29 fully online schools served 7,188 students, a 7% increase from the prior year.[488] The Wisconsin Digital Learning Collaborative is a partnership between Wisconsin Virtual School, the Wisconsin eSchool Network, and the DPI, with a combined 20,000 online course enrollments in SY 2013–14. A number of districts have blended programs and there are several fully blended schools.

Act 20[489] (2013) changed the part-time open enrollment program, now referred to as "Course Options,"[490] to allow K–12 students enrolled in public school districts to take up to two online courses at one time at no cost to the student. The guidelines established by the DPI for Course Options include:

- If the student enrolls in an online course provided by a non-resident district, charter school, or non-profit organization approved by the DPI, the resident district pays the cost of online course,[491] or 1/7 of a full-time open enrollment amount, whichever is less. The full-time open enrollment amount for SY 2014–15 is about $948 for a one credit course or $474 for a one-half credit course. The provision prohibits the course provider from charging a pupil or resident district any additional fees.

[487] Any authorized virtual charter may choose not to operate in a given year. The list is subject to change. Retrieved June 30, 2014; http://sms.dpi.wi.gov/files/sms/pdf/cs_2014_VirtualSchs.pdf

[488] Enrollment numbers for fully online schools were updated since *Keeping Pace 2013* was published.

[489] Act 20 (2013); retrieved June 30, 2014; https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/2013/related/acts/20. Section 1810 created Course Options; Section 1736.115.28 (54) pertains to the requirement for teachers to be physically present; Section 1735.115.28 (27) created WiseLearn.

[490] Course Options program; retrieved July 2, 2014; http://courseoptions.dpi.wi.gov/

[491] The cost of a course from an Educational Institution is based on what it costs the institution to offer the course, and is determined by a calculation established by the DPI.

- Allows a resident school district to reject a Course Options application from a student if the course does not satisfy a high school graduation requirement or conform to the student's academic and career plan.
- Sets the cost for a student enrolling in a dual-credit course taught in the resident district by a district teacher on a negotiated agreement between the resident school district and an institution of higher education (IHE) with the expectation that the course be cost-neutral for both parties.
- For courses where an IHE is the course provider, the resident district will pay 50% of the IHE course tuition, not to exceed 50% of University of Wisconsin-Madison tuition for a course with the same number of credits, plus any fees and/or book costs. The resident school district and IHE may negotiate a lower fee.
- Students must apply to the educational institution no later than six weeks before the scheduled start of the course. The provider may deny a student's application because space in the course is not available, the student does not meet the provider's criteria for being admitted to the course, or the student is not enrolled in a Wisconsin public school district. Students must also notify the resident district.

Between 2007 and 2013, Wisconsin had been one of very few states to require in statute[492] that teachers 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.[493] Act 20 (2013) repealed the teacher training requirement, and prohibited the DPI from requiring a teacher licensed to teach in a virtual charter school to complete professional development not required of teachers who do not teach in a virtual charter school. Act 20 prohibited the DPI from requiring a licensed Wisconsin teacher to be physically present in a classroom in which the delivery of content or collaborative instruction is being delivered through an online course. Act 20 also created WISELearn to provide educational resources for teachers, students, and parents, including an educator resource portal, a learning management system, content repository, collaboration cloud, regional technical support centers, professional development for teachers, and the ability to do video conferencing.[494]

The DPI worked with the Virtual Education Research Alliance[495] to survey all Wisconsin districts to identify online opportunities. A report summarizing the results of the survey was targeted for August 2014.

Digital programs

Wisconsin Virtual School (WVS) was created as a statewide online program originating out of Cooperative Educational Service Agency (CESA) #9 in 2000. Through a partnership between the DPI and CESA #9, WVS has operated independently as the state virtual school since 2008. WVS offers courses for students in grades 6–12 and served 5,357 course enrollments in SY 2013–14. WVS had a budget of $1.77 million SY 2013–14 and is funded largely through course fees; middle and high school courses cost $325 per semester per course.

The Wisconsin eSchool Network (WEN) is a consortium of 19 partnering school districts, eight of which are among the 11 largest districts in the state. WEN served 14,644 course enrollments in SY 2013–14, a 43% increase over the previous year. WEN was formally established as a 501(c) (3) nonprofit organization in 2012. WEN provides blended learning services to its members including online curriculum, a learning management system, and a registration portal.

WVS and WEN signed a memorandum of understanding with the DPI in 2012 to operate under the umbrella of the Wisconsin Digital Learning Collaborative and meet a statutory requirement for the Wisconsin Web Academy. The organizations continue to operate autonomously for SY 2014–15, but the collaboration allows for a single point of access to online courses, digital learning solutions, support, and professional learning communities.

Additional policy history is available at www.kpk12.com/states/.

[492] Act 222; retrieved July 2, 2013; http://www.legis.state.wi.us/2007/data/acts/07act222.pdf
[493] Wisconsin State Statute 118.19 (13); retrieved July 2, 2013; https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/statutes/statutes/118/19
[494] WISELearn Portal; retrieved June 2, 2014; http://wiselearn.dpi.wi.gov/
[495] Virtual Education Research Alliance; retrieved July 10, 2014; http://www.relmidwest.org/VirtualLearningResearchAlliance.php

Wyoming

DIGITAL LEARNING STATE SNAPSHOT

The Wyoming Switchboard Network delivers online and supplemental options through **18 approved** statewide, single-district, and postsecondary distance education providers.

There were an estimated **1,689 part- or full-time online students** in SY 2013–14, a decrease of 15%.

Availability of online learning options

SUPPLEMENTAL			FULLY ONLINE		
K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)	K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)
NONE	SOME	MOST	ALL	ALL	ALL

Availability of info: Great **Good** Fair Poor Minimal

Does this state have…	Y	N
Student choice for publicly funded fully online schools?	●	
Student choice for publicly funded supplemental online courses?		●
SVS or another publicly funded option for private / homeschool students?		●
Prior public school attendance requirement for online schools?		●
Online caps by class, school, district, or statewide?	●	
PD requirement for online teachers?		●
State approval process for online providers?		●
State approval process for online courses?		●
Online learning requirement for students?		●
End-of-course exams?		●
Separate state reporting of online course enrollments?	●	

4 statewide fully online schools.

Each instructor is limited (unless a waiver is requested) to a max of 6 sections and 25 students.

WSN requires distance education preparation.

WSN has one for single-district / statewide providers.

Required to report "distance education" enrollments, all of which are online.

Digital learning activity in Wyoming is delivered through the Wyoming Switchboard Network, comprised of 18 approved statewide, single-district, and postsecondary distance education (DE) providers. The Wyoming Department of Education (WDE) estimates there were 1,689 full- or part-time online students in SY 2013–14, a decrease of 13%.[496]

Students may participate in fully online programs through their resident district, or they may transfer directly into a district that manages a fully online program. In SY 2013–14, four Wyoming school districts operated statewide online programs. Single-district delivery of distance education coursework was provided by seven districts, and seven postsecondary institutions delivered distance education coursework.

The Wyoming Switchboard Network (WSN) website acts as the central "switchboard" of distance education resources.[497] The site provides access to curriculum mapping for 740 DE courses available statewide, detailed information about the various DE program providers, and Wyoming's key policy documents and DE information.

With its past annual report to the legislature, Wyoming has been one of few states that can cross-reference state assessment and course completion data with a student's DE provider and break down enrollments to create a comprehensive picture of some of the details about DE students and providers. WDE estimated that a total of 1,689 unique students participated in full-time and supplemental programs in SY 2013–14, a decrease of 15% from the previous year (compared to a 30% increase between SY 2012–13 and SY 2013–14). As of August 2014 the SY 2013–14 report was not yet published; further data will be made available on the *Keeping Pace* website at www.kpk12.com/states when available.

[496] Personal Communication with Wyoming Department of Education, August 15, 2014
[497] Wyoming Switchboard Network; retrieved July 7, 2014; http://www.wyomingswitchboard.net/Home.aspx

Digital programs

In SY 2013–14 four schools provided fully online distance education courses to students statewide:

- Campbell County Virtual School (Campbell County School District #1), offering courses to students in grades K–6 through provider K12 Inc.
- Evanston Virtual High School, or EVHS (Uinta County School District #1), a mastery-based program for students in grades 9–12. EVHS requires students to demonstrate proficiency in order to progress through courses.
- Wyoming Connections Academy (Big Horn County School District #1), a fully online school for students in grades K–12, which also offers opportunities for supplemental coursework.
- Wyoming Virtual Academy (Niobrara County School District #1), a fully online school for K–12 students and part-time secondary students; curriculum is provided by K12 Inc.

Seven single-district providers offered supplemental distance education coursework, using a range of digital modes: Carbon County School District #1 (grades 6–12), Carbon County School District #2, Fremont County School District #21, Natrona County School District #1 (grades 9–12), Park County School District #1, Sheridan County School District #2, and Washakie County School District #1. Postsecondary distance education coursework is provided to high school students by Casper College (with Natrona County School District), Central Wyoming College, Eastern Wyoming College, Laramie County Community College, Northern Wyoming Community College District, Northwest College, and Western Wyoming Community College. In 2014 the Uinta County School District (UCSD #1) began a five-year process of phasing in a Personalized and Blended Learning program across the district. There are 3,000 students in the district, and over 2,700 devices currently in use.[498]

State policies

During SY 2008–09, the WDE promulgated the Chapter 41 Rules and Regulations that govern DE processes and procedures within the state.[499] Wyoming Statute WS§21-2 202(a) (xxxi)[500] 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 also must provide training and technical assistance to districts for DE delivery; monitor the design, content, delivery, and accreditation of DE programs provided by districts; and establish criteria and necessary components of individual student distance learning plans. Finally, the WDE implemented a reporting process to meet federal and state funding requirements, and established data collection instruments and systems to monitor and improve DE programs statewide. Per WS§21-13-330, districts where DE 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.

WS§21-13-330 and the Chapter 41 Distance Education Rules also established policies for funding DE course enrollments. The statute allows districts to include DE courses in ADM calculations via the use of milestones or course objectives, and to agree to release students to participate full-time in DE in a non-resident district. Each year the Wyoming Distance Education Grant Program makes funding available to assist DE providers with development and maintenance of their programs and courses.

The WSN Resident District Handbook[501] 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/.

[498] UCSD #1 Blended Learning; retrieved July 11, 2014; http://www.uinta1.k12.wy.us/academics.cfm?subpage=1871294
[499] Chapter 41 Distance Education Rules; retrieved July 11, 2014; http://soswy.state.wy.us/Rules/RULES/7334.pdf
[500] Chapter 21, WS§21-2 202 and WS§21-13-330; retrieved July 11; 2014 http://legisweb.state.wy.us/statutes/statutes.aspx?file=titles/Title21/Title21.htm
[501] WSN Resident District Handbook; retrieved July 12, 2014; http://wyomingswitchboard.net/Docs/WSNRDHB.pdf

Appendix A: Methodology

The information found in *Keeping Pace 2014* comes from a combination of Internet research, emails, and phone interviews with personnel from state education agencies, state virtual schools, digital programs, and other sources.

For state profiles, research and reviews of state laws were combined with phone interviews, emails, and direct contact with officials in those states. For states with little new activity in 2014, in many cases the research team reviewed and made minor changes to state profiles that were presented in *Keeping Pace 2013*, sometimes moving historical information to the individual state pages on the *Keeping Pace* website at www.kpk12.com/states/. In some cases, the state education agency or other designated individuals reviewed draft versions of the profile for accuracy. In a field that is growing and changing as rapidly as digital learning, 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 August 22, 2014, and every effort has been made to ensure currency of information as of that date.

Enrollment data are collected from a variety of sources. The preferred source is a state department of education official reporting website. However, some states do not publish enrollment data, some states did not have SY 2013–14 data available as of August 22, 2014, or online programs may not be required to report online enrollments specifically to the state. In those instances, enrollment data were typically collected via personal communication with state programs and/or state education agency officials. For most states and programs, enrollment data are reported for summer 2013, fall 2013, and spring 2014, often combined into one number that we call school year (SY) 2013–14.

In addition to the methods described above, the sponsoring organizations for *Keeping Pace* provided extensive expertise and knowledge that strengthened research efforts. 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.

Appendix B: Definitions

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
Memorandum of understanding

PPR
Per-pupil revenue

RFP
Request for proposals

SEA
State education agency

SY
School year

Digital learning is any instructional practice in or out of school that uses digital technology to strengthen a student's learning experience and improve educational outcomes. Our use of the term is broad and not limited to online, blended, and related learning. It encompasses a wide range of digital tools and practices, including instructional content, interactions, data and assessment systems, learning platforms, online courses, adaptive software, personal learning enabling technologies, and student data management systems to provide timely and rich data to guide personalized learning.

Schools are institutions of instruction that are authorized to provide for-credit instruction to students. For this report a school must have a unique National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) identification code.

Programs work directly with students but are not a "School." May include consortia, alternative education initiatives that don't qualify as a school, some state virtual schools, and course choice initiatives that coordinate offerings for students from multiple providers.

Charter schools provide free publicly funded elementary and/or secondary education to eligible students under a specific charter granted by the state legislature or other appropriate authority.

State virtual schools are created by legislation or by a state-level agency, and/or administered by a state education agency, and/or receive state appropriation or grant funding for the purpose of providing online learning opportunities across the state. They also may charge course fees to help cover costs.

Single-district programs are online programs that serve students who reside within the district providing the online courses. Single-district programs may in some cases serve a limited number of students from outside the home district.

Supplemental online programs provide online courses to students who are enrolled in a school separate from the online program. Some states refer to these as part-time programs.

Fully online schools, also called **cyber schools** and **virtual schools**, work with students who are enrolled primarily (often only) in the online school. Online schools typically are responsible for ensuring their students take state assessments, and for their students' scores on those assessments.

Blended learning is "a formal education program in which a student learns at least in part through online learning, with some element of student control over time, place, path, and/or pace; at least in part in a supervised brick-and-mortar location away from home; and the modalities along each student's learning path within a course or subject are connected to provide an integrated learning experience." (The Clayton Christensen Institute for Disruptive Innovation)

Online learning: Teacher-led education that takes place over the Internet, with the teacher and student separated geographically, using an online instructional delivery system. It may be accessed from multiple settings (in school and/or out of school buildings).

Course enrollments—one student in a single 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.

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