

Virtual Schools and e-Learning: Planning for Success

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Virtual Schools & e-Learning

- Virtual School (VS) Context
- Growth Factors (and controversy)
- Why Offer/Benefits and Limits
- How can a VS program be offered
- Key VS components
- Lessons Learned/Success factors
- Road Map

Virtual School Context

- The terms "virtual high school" or "virtual school" are generally applied to any educational organization that offers K-12 courses through Internet- or Web-based methods (Clark, 2001).

Virtual School Context

- K-12 “e-Learning” refers not only to virtual school courses, but to distance learning by other electronic methods, and the use of technology to support teaching and learning in schools

Virtual School Context

- K-12 virtual schools cresting after the maturation of online higher education
- How to avoid repeating the costly failures – before the fall (Wilson keynote)
- Our idea: ask successful virtual schools what they have done to plan for success

Virtual Context

- The virtual school movement is the 'next wave' in technology-based K-12 education (TA Consulting/WestEd, 2001)
- 32 states sponsoring e-learning initiatives, including online testing, virtual schools, online prof. development (EdWeek, 2002)

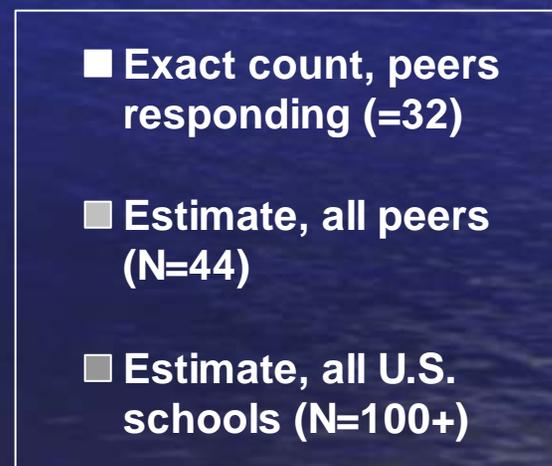
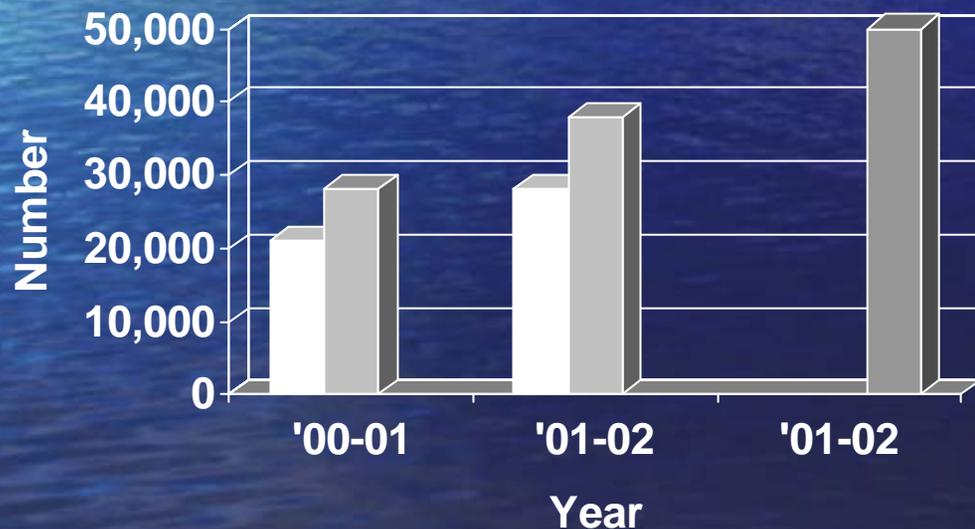
Context: How Many Students?

- Perennial question: *What's the scope of K-12 online learning? How many K-12 students are taking online courses?*
- Few surveys on the subject
- Much speculation

Context: How Many Students?

- WestEd survey, 2001
- Estimated 40-50,000 unique students

Individuals enrolled K-12 virtual schools



Context: How Many Students?

- Peak Group survey (2002)

- Estimated 180,000 student enrollments in 2002-2003

- Surveyed larger provider sample (N=88)

- Possible some independent study students were counted by responders

- But probably missed students in small virtual school programs

Context: How Many Students?

- Course enrollments
vs. unique students

→ Example: Florida
Virtual School (FLVS)

→ Average student takes 1.5 courses

→ 03-04: **12,000** FLVS enrollments by about
8,000 unique students

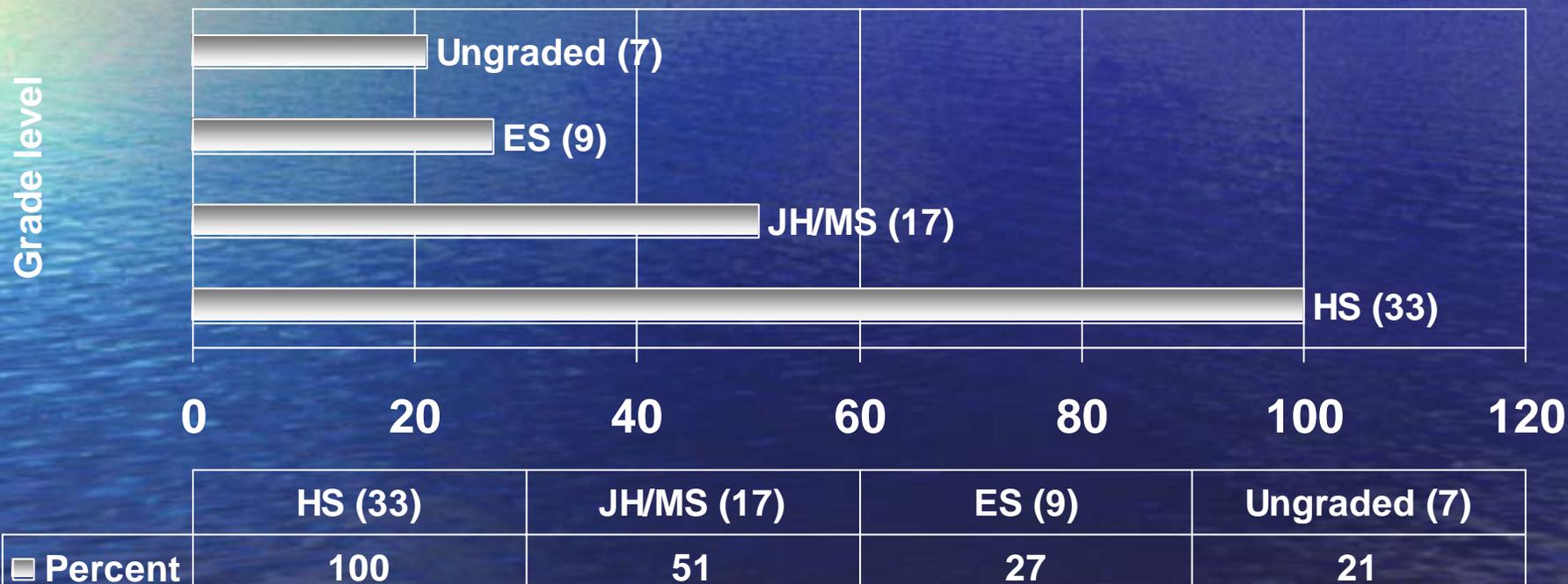


Context: How Many Students?

- A better answer to “how many students?”
- (Yes & No) **NCES Survey, Spring 2004**
 - Sample of public schools nationwide
 - Will count student enrollments by district in distance learning courses
 - Not broken out by online, satellite, etc.
 - Will miss those not enrolled via public

Context: Not just HS

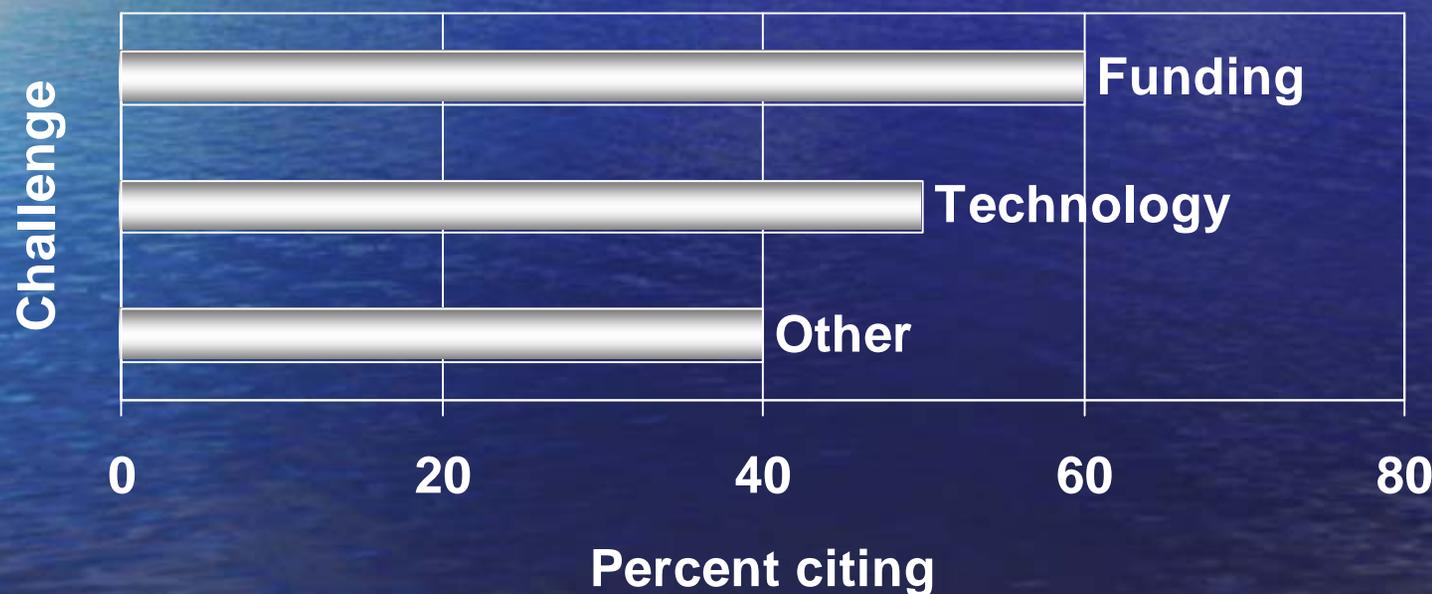
- Not just high school –many virtual schools enrolling middle and/or elementary students



Source: Virtual School Survey, 9/2001, TA Consulting/WestEd

Context: What are barriers

- Most common barriers to overcome



Source: Virtual School Survey, 9/2001, TA Consulting/WestEd

Growth Factors

- Finding funding is a barrier ... **but multiple funding sources have spurred support growth of virtual schools**
- Federal, state, foundation grants and programs
 - State aid OK'd for virtual courses
 - Issue: when grant's over, then what?
 -  : there is life after the grant

Growth Factors

- School technology infrastructure can now support online learning

→ e-Rate: \$5.8 billion by '01

→ 99% of schools have Net access

→ 87% of instructional rooms online

→ 55% high speed (T1/DS1) access

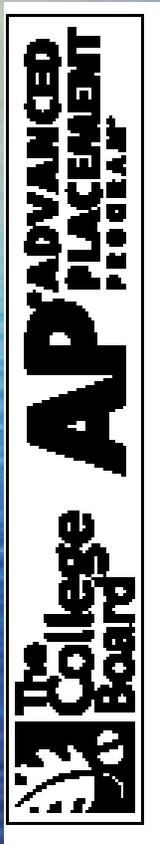
→ Students to Internet computers: 5.4 to 1

(Source: NCES 2001-071, 2002-018)

Growth Factors

- Today's K-12 students "native" to the virtual learning space (Prensky keynote)
 - Internet-savvy students see skills as superior to teachers (Levin, Arafeh, 2002)
 - Growth in e-learning will be fueled by the current generation ... predicts \$50 billion e-learning market by 2010 (Ben Hamlin, *eMarketer*, 2003)

Growth Factors



- Virtual learning is a tool for providing **new curricular access**, especially to increase educational equity
- Many virtual schools: expanded access in mission statements (WestEd, 2001)
- **Example**: Feds/states support online Advanced Placement© access for low income/high-need HS students
- Purpose - improve college placement

Benefits and Limits

- 👍 improved access to rich/varied curricula
- 👎 Courses not always high quality, or uneven
- 👍 Improved outcomes –further ed, jobs
(Ex.: AP in college; 21st century skills)
- 👎 High initial dropout – long term NA
- 👎 Difficult to link, track outcomes

Benefits and Limits

- 👍 Access "anytime, anywhere"
- 👎 Must access via personal computer on Net – not via PDAs, phone (Prensky)
- 👎 Gaps in home Net access, digital divide

- 👍 Increased access for high-need students
- 👎 Lower participation and success rates

Benefits and Limits

-  Encourage collaboration, teamwork
-  Feelings of isolation, role confusion

-  Develop self-discipline, time mgt. skills
-  Self pacing problems
-  Workload shock

Benefits and Limits

- 👍😊 **Strengthen writing, critical thinking skills**
- 👎😞 Reading for comprehension, extensive online keyboarding in “proper” English – many students unprepared
- 👍😊 **Gain tech troubleshooting skills**
- 👎😞 Variable technical support, levels of student skill to address tech issues

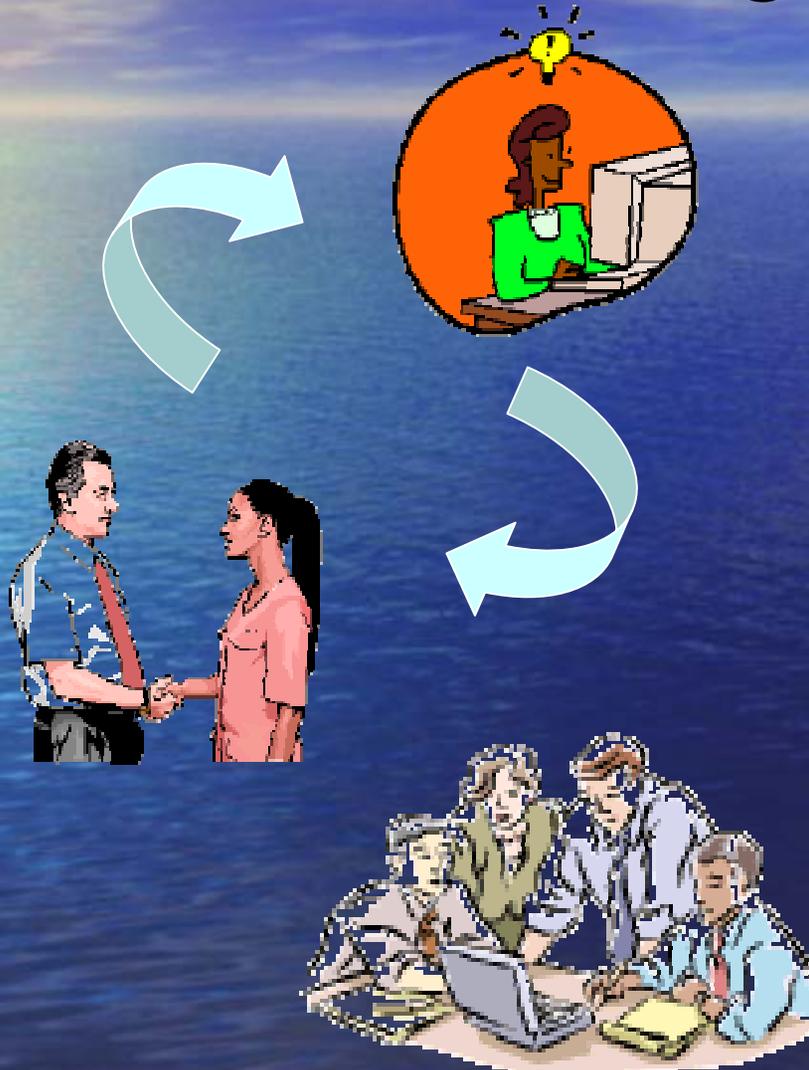
Benefits and Limits

- 👍 Provides a “second chance” or alternative educational path for students needing one
- 👎 Computer assisted instruction for remedial purposes in 80s/90s ... taken it online may not be improvement
- 👍 Promotes educational choice for home schoolers and students who attend underperforming schools
- 👎 Concerns about effects of choice on public school funding and attendance, and about virtual charter school quality

Controversy

- **Virtual schools – controversy and myth**
- Annual PDK polls consistently showed only 30% of U. S. adults favored high school students taking online courses instead of attending regular school (Rose & Gallup, 2000; 2002)
- Many Americans may have impression a virtual school ONLY means a virtual charter school used in educational choice, to replace the public school
- Actually, most virtual school enrollments are probably by students attending a regular school who take a course or two online to enhance their curriculum
- The **2004 ED survey** may help show the range of beneficial virtual school uses by public schools

How can VS Program be Offered

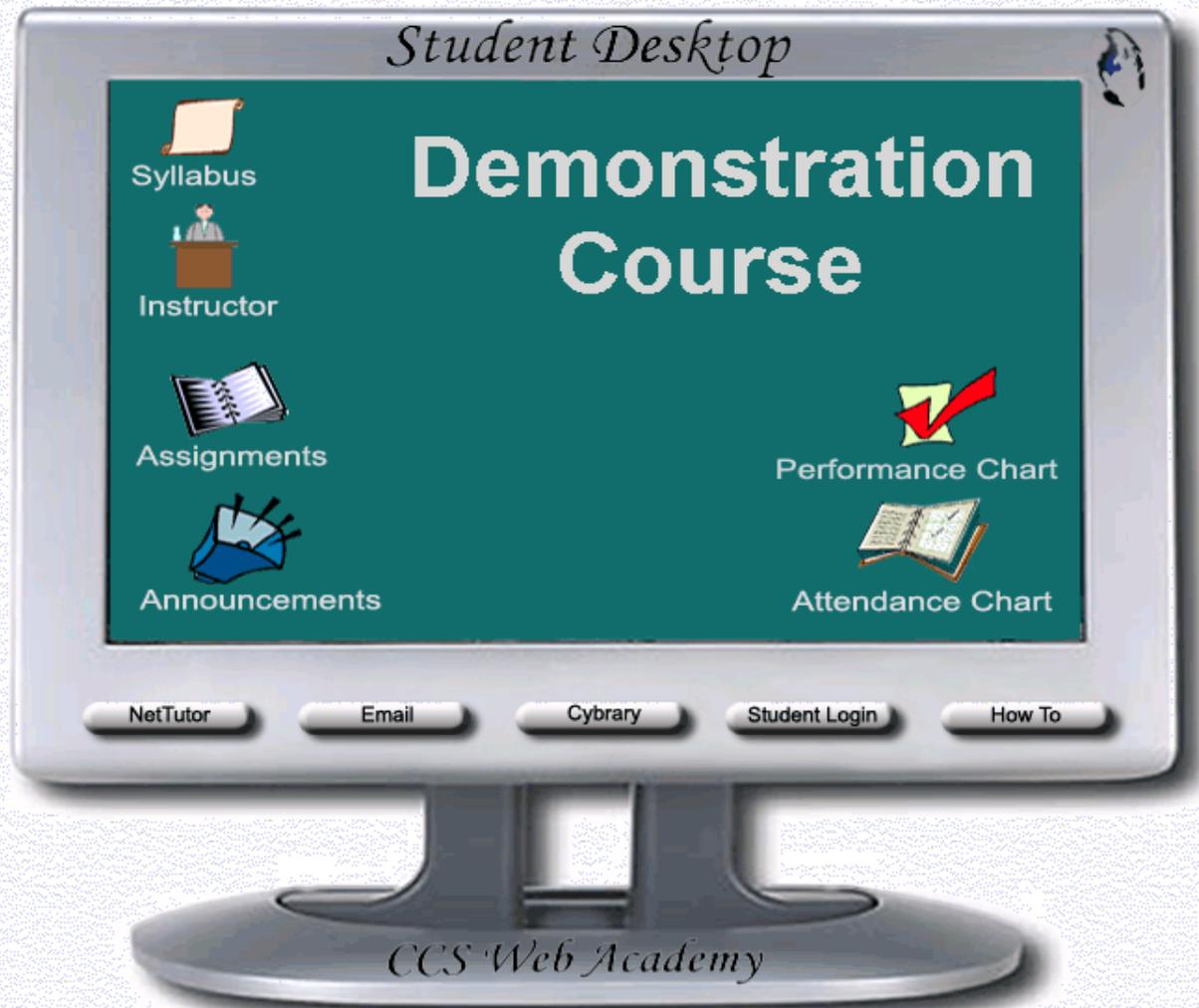


- Create “from scratch”
- Use providers
- Use a mix ...
- Or join a collaborative

How can VS Program be Offered

- Most common: a **local education agency** starts a virtual school program
 - Many 100s of districts doing so
 - Offer anywhere from 1 course to a full curriculum, internal/external developed
 - Most serve students residing in district, but many have external strategies too
 - **Example: CCS Web Academy**

Local education agency



How can VS Program be Offered

- Most local virtual school programs use external resources
 - Courses, content, learning management systems and academic technical support
 - Resources provided by large virtual schools and course/e-Learning solutions providers
 - Some participate in a collaborative to create their own larger virtual school

How can VS Program be Offered

- Who provides virtual learning resources?
 - State-level virtual schools
 - Example: Florida Virtual School
 - University-based virtual schools
 - Example: University of Missouri-Columbia High School

State-level, state sanctioned

Welcome to the Florida Virtual School! - Microsoft Internet Explorer provided by Warpnet Communications

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Florida
VirtualSchool

*Any time, any place,
any path, any pace.*

Let's Get Started
Complete your lesson,
access student progress,
or register for class.
ENTER

Learn More
Find out if online
learning and FLVS
are right for you.
ENTER

Build a Virtual S
License courses, train
teachers, or build a sc
from the ground up.
ENTER

Done Internet

University-based

The screenshot shows a Microsoft Internet Explorer browser window. The title bar reads "High School Courses through Distance and Independent Study, University of Missouri- Columbia Hi - Microsoft...". The address bar contains "http://cdis.missouri.edu/MUHighSchool/HShome.htm". The browser's menu bar includes File, Edit, View, Favorites, Tools, and Help. The navigation buttons are Back, Forward, and Stop. The status bar shows "Links Search the Web Customize Links Insight Communications - High Speed Internet Access Free Hotmail".

The website content features a header with the text "University of Missouri-Columbia High School" and the tagline "The freedom to learn from anywhere." Below this is a navigation menu with links for Courses, Enrollment, FAQs, Search, Map, and Contact. A yellow banner contains the text "Already enrolled? Access your student information here." The main content area is titled "MU High School" and includes a sub-header "From the Desk of Kristi Smalley" with the text "It's Almost Crunch Time" and "Take a Course Home for the Summer". A paragraph describes the school as part of the University of Missouri Center for Distance and Independent Study, accredited by the North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement. A final paragraph states the mission of the school to provide courses through various delivery methods, complement traditional high school curricula, and provide an accredited diploma program for independent learners of all

On the right side of the page, there is a vertical sidebar with a blue header "High School" and a yellow background. It contains four links: "Enrollment Information", "Course Information", "Course Index", and "Diploma Program". An image of a young woman is visible in the top right corner of the page content.

How can VS Program be Offered

Tuition charged: 1-semester, out of district

Type of school	Low	High	Mean
All VS	\$78	\$385	\$264
U independent study VS	\$78	\$299	\$164
Statewide VS	\$300	\$385	\$333
District VS	\$150	\$350	\$285

Source: Virtual School Survey, 9/2001, TA Consulting/WestEd

How can VS Program be Offered

- Who provides virtual learning resources?
 - E-Learning solutions/course providers
 - Example: K-12, Inc.
 - Private schools
 - Example: Sagemont Virtual School

e-learning solutions provider

K12: Education for a Lifetime - home school curriculum, lesson plans, Accredited homeschooling - Microsoft Internet Exp...

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Private schools

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Address http://www.sagemontonline.com/Default.asp?bhjs=1&bhs=1024&bhsh=768&bhswi=993&bhshi=580&bhflver=5&bhdir=1&bhje=1&bhcold=16&bhrl=-1&bhq=-1&bhmp= Go Links >>



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Sagemont Integrates Online Education with a Traditional High School



The Sagemont Virtual School (SVS) offers a unique blended online and brick and mortar educational opportunity for high school students throughout the globe.

Current Newsletters

- [Find out more:](#)
- [Student Handbook](#)
- [Parent Orientation](#)

Sagemont Virtual School is a private operator of a virtual high school that offers students a college preparatory curriculum that meets and exceeds the standards of most states. SVS helps each student maximize his/her learning potential through an individualized learning program that combines the best in virtual education with very real connections among students, teachers, facilitators and family.

Built upon the success of Sagemont's brick and mortar Lower and Upper Schools in Weston, Florida, SVS combines Internet-based courses taught by Sagemont teachers with an array of services for students and their families: college counseling, career internships, virtual and real field trips and virtual clubs. Students have available to them all of the added activities that a traditional high school has to offer, and will be able to formulate their own mix of online classes and on campus activities to suit individual needs.



SVS provides students with the flexibility to either continue for one or more courses or complete their high school education on a schedule of their choice at anytime of day at anytime of the year. Students can access their courses online, 365 days a year, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Unlike correspondence school and home-schooling options, SVS is a complete high school. Students are taught by full-time teachers certified by the state departments of education in their content areas with

How can VS Program be Offered

- Other paths for local schools:
 - Join a virtual school collaborative
 - Example: The Virtual High School (VHS, Inc.)
 - Become an online charter school
 - Example: Basehor-Linwood Virtual Charter School; Appleton eSchool

Collaborative (Regional/Natl)

Welcome to Virtual High School! - Microsoft Internet Explorer provided by Warpnet Communications

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What is it? Where is it? And why it's cool to go to Virtual High School[®]!

[Main Office](#)

The office staff is happy to answer questions, register students, tell you how to join VHS[®] and more.

Hello Guest!
Announcements for Tuesday, March 12:

Congratulations to Erica Quigley of Perkiomen Valley High School. Erica was selected by The National Foundation for Teaching Entrepreneurship as a winner of the Young Entrepreneur of the Year Award for 2002!

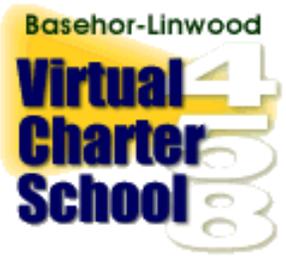
 [Feedback](#)

Login

If you are a VHS student or faculty member be sure to log in to take full advantage of the services available to you!

Internet

Virtual charter school



Basehor-Linwood
Virtual Charter School

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Virtual Charter School

Basehor-Linwood USD 458

Basehor-Linwood Virtual Charter School

Mission Statement:

The mission of the VCS is to create and develop alternative approaches to delivering educational processes through the use of current and emerging technologies.

Goals:

- To provide via the Internet educational resources and instructional support to those students who are pursuing alternative educational approaches.
- To provide enrichment and networking opportunities.
- To validate student's academic achievements, and establish a valid academic record which includes standardized tests and local assessments.

VCS News 4:20PM CST

- [End of Year Considerations](#). As the academic year comes to a close please consider the following tasks and requirements: 
- [School Day with the KC Royals](#). Join us for a day of fun with the Royals Baseball Team.
- [Note of Appreciation](#). The BLVCS staff would like

Some Key Components

- Funding
- Technology
- Curriculum & instruction
- Academic services
- Professional development
- Access/equity planning
- Assessment
- Policy & administration
- Marketing & public relations

Success Factors

- For selected key components --
- What are some “lessons learned” by virtual school planners?
- How does it help explain their success?

Lessons Learned/Success Factors

- Funding:

→ **Strategy:** VHS, Inc. successfully transitions in 01-02 from 5-year federal grant to membership and professional development fees paid by participating schools

→ In year 4, *“An eighteen-month budget cycle was built into the business plan to give schools time to incorporate membership fees”*

-- Liz Pape, Exec. Dir., and others

Lessons Learned/Success Factors

- Funding:

- **Strategy:** Sagemont Virtual School is a full-fare, prestigious private school venue for a select college prep group (\$9750/yr.)
- **Strategy:** statewide Florida Virtual School transitions from line item funding to being part of state funding formula, 03-04; in return receives FTE funding only for successful public school students
- *"It means virtual learning options are here to stay in Florida"* -- Julie Young, FLVS Exec. Dir.

Lessons Learned/Success Factors

- Equity:

→ **Strategy:** The University of California College Prep (UCCP) program successfully focused on access and equity for minority students, with 59% minority enrollment in AP[©] courses.

→ *“Virtual schools should set a goal that their student body reflect the ethnic/racial makeup of their related area of service.”*

– Francisco Hernandez, Exec. Dir., UCCP

Lessons Learned/Success Factors

- Curriculum & Instruction

→ **Strategy:** Cumberland County Schools (CCS) Web Academy successfully created own online instructional model, blending asynchronous and synchronous instruction

→ *"Recently I have seen a national trend ... some virtual schools that have offered asynchronous instruction alone are adding elements of synchronous instruction"*

-- Allan Jordan, CCSWA Principal; Chair, NACOL

Lessons Learned/Success Factors

- Marketing & Public Relations

→ **Strategy:** The University of Missouri-Columbia High School (MUHS), traditionally independent study, has succeeded in adding an online curriculum that expands reach in schools

→ *“Public school officials may mistakenly believe that an online high school program will draw students away ... the utmost care must be taken to keep the proper officials informed of your plans.”*

-- Kristi Smalley, MUHS Principal

Road Map

- Is there a “road map” to success in planning a virtual school program?
- A work in progress
- Clearly, paths to success differ significantly depending on the nature of the virtual school effort
- Not “one size fits all”

Questions and Ideas

- If you are exploring, starting, or operating a virtual school ...
- What do you think are some key factors for virtual learning success in your unique context?

Virtual Schools and e-Learning

- Thanks for attending!

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