

REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL LABORATORY

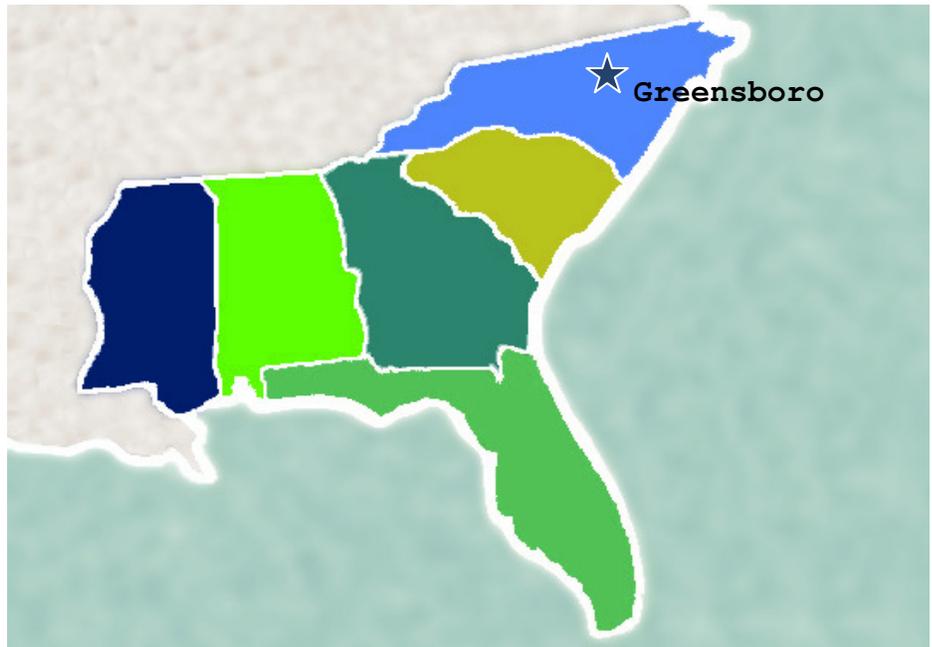
SOUTHEAST ~ SERVECenter

November 2010, EBE # 741

EVIDENCE BASED EDUCATION REQUEST DESK

OUR GOAL

To assist educators and policymakers in their efforts to apply the evidence base to decisions about policies, programs, and practices they encounter.



REQUEST: Funding for virtual schools

Please provide a scan of states for information on how they fund virtual schools and what the current funding levels are (most current year for which such data is available). By "how they fund," we mean what funds are provided/from what sources for the operation of the schools. By "virtual schools," we refer to virtual schools regardless of their type including statewide virtual schools (e.g., Florida Virtual School, <http://www.flvs.net/areas/a...>, Georgia Virtual School, <http://www.gavirtualschool...>) and statewide virtual charter schools that may be run by states, school districts, or companies (e.g., Georgia Cyber Academy, <http://www.k12.com/gca/>). Please include in the state scan the six Southeastern states plus Ohio, Wisconsin, and Colorado (and if any other states pop up in your search as having a lot of information available, include those as well). This response might be best provided in a table format.

RESPONSE

REL-SE staff searched the websites of the Education Commission of the States (www.ecs.org) and The International Association for K-12 Online Learning (<http://www.inacol.org/>). The most relevant resource found was Watson, J., Gemin, B., Ryan, J., & Wicks, M. (November 2009). *Keeping Pace with K-12 Online Learning: An Annual Review of State-Level Policy and Practice*. Evergreen, CO: Evergreen Education Group. (<http://www.kpk12.com/downloads/KeepingPace09-fullreport.pdf>). The table below was created from text taken from this document.

If you have any questions regarding this document, please contact the REL-SE, 1-800-755-3277 or RELSoutheast@serve.org

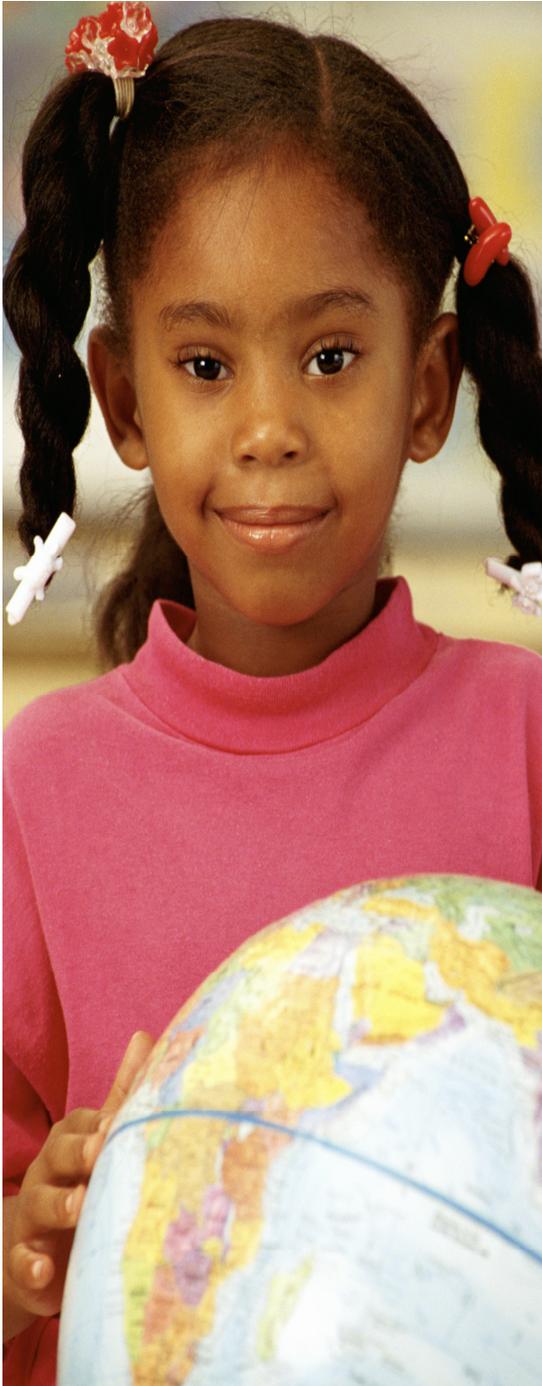
| State | Virtual School/Type | School type | Funding Provided/Sources | Current funding levels |
|-------|--|----------------------|--|---|
| AL | Alabama ACCESS Distance Learning | State virtual school | The ACCESS state appropriation for FY 2009–10 is \$22.5 million, a \$2.2 million decrease over the 2008–09 budget. The reduction is based on a state government proration formula applied to all government programs to meet state budget shortfalls for FY2009. ACCESS also received a one-time appropriation of \$11 million in capital bond funding from the State Superintendent of Education during 2009. Capital bond funding is distributed to educational programs at the discretion of the Superintendent, who made a priority of completion of 21st Century ACCESS labs in schools across the state a year ahead of schedule. | FY 2009–10: \$22.5 million |
| FL | Florida Virtual School (State also has district programs and FLVS franchises) | State virtual school | <p>FLVS is funded through public FTE dollars, with full funding contingent upon student success. For grades K–5 students, this is based on grade promotion. For grades 6–12 students, funding is based on successful course or credit completions. Districts receive the funding for each student and may negotiate a cost for the online program at a rate less than the per-pupil funding. Any high school student in Florida can choose an FLVS course without restriction, and the funding tied to that student goes to FLVS. No other state-led program has this funding model.</p> <p>For Florida Virtual School, per student funding was cut by approximately 10% for 2009–10, to \$464 per semester course, and FLVS lost class size funding. FLVS will still receive an 11.4% add-on to FTE funding to account for students that do not complete their courses but only for public school students.</p> | FY 2009–10: \$464 per semester course |
| GA | Georgia Virtual School | State virtual school | The Georgia Virtual School is funded from a state appropriation, about \$1.75 million in 2008–09, which provides a set amount to each district for online learning. When students take courses with GAVS, the district gives GAVS the equivalent of the district’s FTE portion for that course segment. The state then uses those monies to pay GAVS. The amount that GAVS receives per course segment varies from one district to the next, based on the funding formula for each district. Districts receive \$25 per course segment to defer administrative costs. | Approximately \$1.75 million in 2008–09 |

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| | | | School districts can choose to disallow a local student from taking a GAVS course under this funding formula. While such a policy can suppress the district's incentive to encourage online learning as an option, current law in Georgia only allows students to take one online course per semester, or a total of two courses per school year anyway. | |
| | <p>Georgia Cyber Academy</p> <p>(There are also several single-district online programs.</p> <p>A commission was created in 2008 to authorize online charter schools and set funding; none authorized as of September 2009.)</p> | Multidistrict, statewide online charter school | Public education funding formula. | |
| MS | <p>Mississippi Virtual Public School</p> <p>(State also has some district-run online programs)</p> | State virtual school | Funded by state appropriation. | \$1.8 million for 2009–10 |

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| NC | North Carolina Virtual Public School (NCVPS) | State virtual school | In 2008, NCVPS received a total appropriation of \$11.2 million. The North Carolina General Assembly has also charged NCVPS to develop and implement funding plan based upon average daily membership or enrollment. This funding formula is to be presented in fall 2009 with a goal of being in place by January 2010. | 2008–2009: \$11.2 million |
| SC | South Carolina Virtual School Program | State virtual school | Funded by state appropriation. | The SC Virtual School Program had a budget of \$3.2 million in 2008–09 |
| | Charter organization authorized three virtual charters in 2008 and another in 2009. | Virtual charter schools | Virtual charter school funds are distributed by the South Carolina Public Charter School District. Virtual charter schools are funded by the same formula applied to all charter schools in the state. | |
| OH | Many online charter schools (community schools) | Virtual charter schools | <p>Community schools, including eCommunity schools, receive state funds directly from the state; these funds have been transferred from school district allocations. eCommunity schools are funded at the same formula per-pupil as traditional districts (\$5,718 for FY 2010).</p> <p>eCommunity schools are not eligible to receive poverty-based funding; however, they do receive the same special education-based funding as all community schools.</p> <p>Since FY 2007, each eCommunity school has been required to spend a designated amount for pupil instruction or face a possible fine of up to 5% of state payments to the school. The 2009 budget bill revised the language in ORC3314.85(A) adding computers and software for students as eligible instruction expenses.</p> | \$5,718 per pupil for FY 2010 |

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| WI | Wisconsin Virtual School (WVS)/ Wisconsin Web Academy (WWA) | State virtual school | WVS/WWA is funded largely through course fees. | 2009 annual budget: \$527,000 |
| | Wisconsin eSchool Network (State also has numerous district programs and online charter schools) | Independent nongovernmental consortium | Education formula funding and grants: the schools are funded through public FTE funds at the same rate as brick-and-mortar schools and, in some cases initially, through federal charter school implementation grants. | |
| CO | Colorado Online Learning Small state (State also has several online charter schools and a growing number of district programs) | State virtual school (nongovernmental, nonprofit organization) | Per-pupil revenue (PPR), an FTE funding model that sets a minimum level of funding and is adjusted upward based on a number of factors for brick-and-mortar districts, remains at the state minimum for most online students. Funding is limited to 1.0 FTE per student and may be split in half but not into smaller units. In cases where students are taking more than half of an FTE class load in two schools, the districts involved negotiate the payment split or, in rare cases, the split is determined by the CDE. Single-district online schools are funded at the district PPR rate, receiving the same funding as the brick-and-mortar schools in that district. | House Bill 1066210 provides \$480,000 annually through 2009–10 to fund a Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) to contract with a provider to provide online courses to school districts across the state for no more than \$200 per student per semester. |

Source: <http://www.kpk12.com/downloads/KeepingPace09-fullreport.pdf>



We provide research based information on educational initiatives happening nationally and regionally. The EBE Request Desk is currently taking requests for:

- Research on a particular topic
- Information on the evidence base for curriculum interventions or professional development programs
- Information on large, sponsored research projects
- Information on southeastern state policies and programs

For more information or to make a request, contact:

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