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Fast Facts About Online Learning



The mission of the International Association for K-12 Online Learning (iNACOL) is to ensure all students have access to a world-class education and quality blended and online learning opportunities that prepare them for a lifetime of success.

iNACOL is a non-profit organization focused on research; developing policy for student-centered education to ensure equity and access; developing quality standards for emerging learning models using online, blended, and competency-based education; and supporting the ongoing professional development of classroom, school, district and state leaders for new learning models.

iNACOL hosts the iNACOL Blended and Online Learning Symposium — the premier K-12 blended and online learning conference. The 2014 conference will take place in Palm Springs, CA, November 4-7, 2014. For more information: inacol.org.

Keep up with latest news stories, reports, research and information on blended and online learning, competency-based pathways, education technology and policy. Subscribe to **Plugged In**: inacol.org/news/plugged-in/.

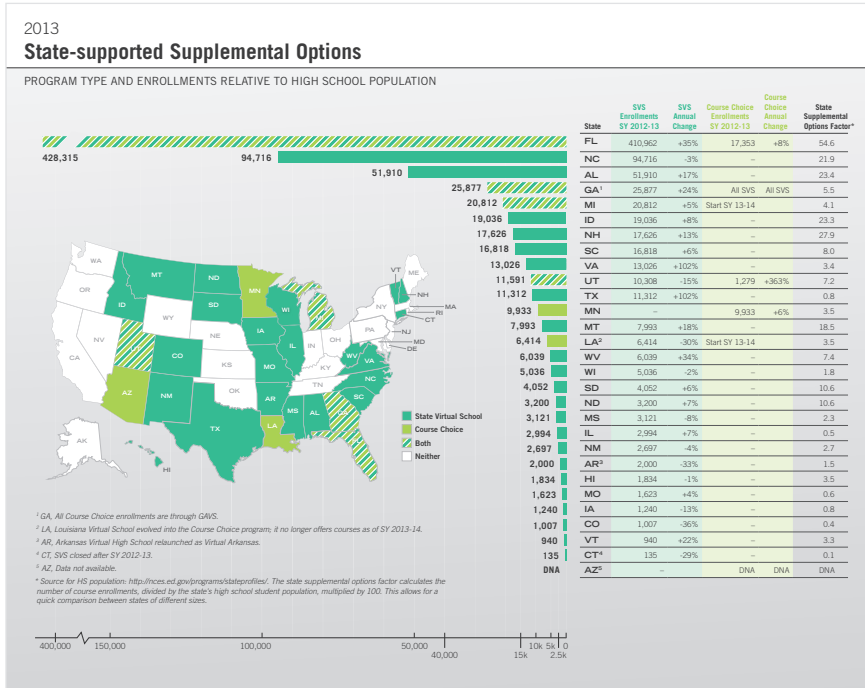
Key K-12 Online Learning Stats

- 25 states have state virtual schools operating in 2013-2014.¹
- 29 states and Washington, DC have statewide full-time online schools operating in 2013-14.¹
- There were an estimated 1,816,400 enrollments in distance-education courses in K-12 school districts in 2009-2010, almost all of which were online courses. 74% of these enrollments were in high schools. Online courses with the highest level of enrollment fall under the categories of credit recovery (62%), dual enrollment (47%), and advanced placement (29%).²
- This enrollment estimate does not include students attending most full-time online schools — approximately 200,00 full-time students in 2009-2010. As of 2012-2013, the number of students has grown to 310,000.¹
- Single and multi-district blended and online programs are the largest and fastest-growing segment of online and blended learning.¹
- Top reasons school districts make online learning opportunities available to their students are to offer courses not otherwise available, and provide opportunities for students to recover course credits. Credit recovery is especially important in urban environments where 81% of schools indicate this is an issue.²
- The College Board estimates that in 2010 only 33.7% of school districts offer AP® or IB courses in English, math, social studies, and science.³
- The U.S. Department of Commerce reported that as of October 2010, more than 68% of households used broadband Internet access service (a four percent increase from 2009), and over 77% of households had a computer.⁴ However, only 45% of households with an annual income of under \$30K, 67% of households between \$30K and \$49.9K, 79% of households between \$50K and \$74.9K and 87% of households over \$75K have access to broadband.^{5,6}
- “Nearly three out of four (72%) 0 to 8-year olds have a computer at home, but access ranges from 48% among those from low-income families (less than \$30,000 a year) to 91% among higher-income families (more than \$75,000).”⁷

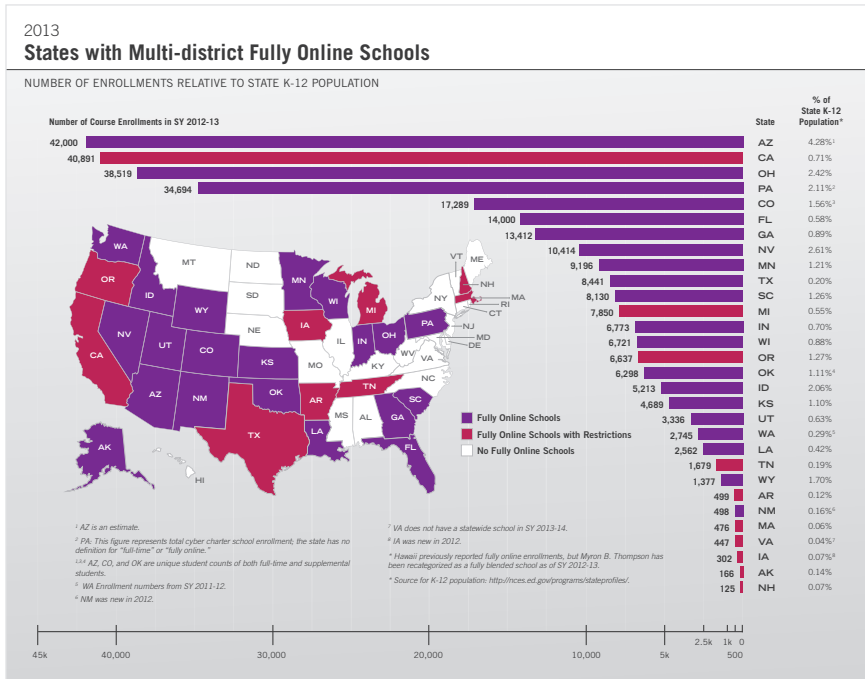


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Key K-12 Online Policy Trends



Keeping Pace, 2013



Keeping Pace, 2013

- As of 2012, Florida is the first state to offer full and part-time options to all students in grades K-12.¹
- Arizona, Kansas, Florida, Minnesota, Utah, Washington, and Wisconsin stand out as states with a wide variety of full-time and supplemental options for students across most grade levels.¹
- In April 2006, Michigan became the first state to require online learning for high school graduation. Since that time Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, and Virginia have added requirements. Georgia, New Mexico, and West Virginia recommend students experience online learning before graduation, however, it is not required.
- Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Michigan, Minnesota, and Utah allow students to choose online courses from multiple content providers.
- Funding formulas are different in all 50 states. For example, many fund online learning at 30-50% less than traditional education, creating inequity and lack of sufficient support for addressing student characteristics. The current U.S. average per pupil expenditures for a fully-online model are estimated at \$6,400 and for blending learning are \$8,900.⁸ Traditional school models have an average per pupil expenditure of \$11,282.⁹
- 45 states and the District of Columbia have adopted the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) representing a historic shift in this country to emphasize higher-order skills and the application of knowledge so that all students are challenged in meaningful ways and are prepared to be successful in a global, knowledge economy. This state-led work has changed the conversation about the country's expectations for all students and the education system itself toward attainment of globally-competitive, world-class knowledge and skills in English/reading/language arts and math.
- Rising costs of books and cash-strapped budgets have schools rethinking the use of textbooks. Because of this, there is a rise in the use of or planning for open educational resources (OER), which "create a pathway to deliver engaging, customized, and up-to-date content to students much faster and more cost effectively than today."¹⁰ For example, as of 2013, Utah has introduced their Utah Open Textbook (UTOT) initiative.¹¹
- By establishing proficiency-based diplomas, advanced competency education policy, credit flexibility or seat-time waivers, 36 states are moving towards competency education.¹²

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Top Federal Policy Issues

- 1 Support accountability frameworks that address quality assurance for schools by providing transparent data on individual student learning proficiency and growth, not time-based accountability based on cohorts of students grouped by birthday. Student-centered, competency-based, new learning models require data for learning that provide information on individual student growth models that can be used by aggregating student learning data for school, district, state and federal accountability. Entry proficiency, exit proficiency, closing the achievement gap and college and career readiness data should inform improvements in learning environments; speed to competency should be one of the indicators.
- 2 Create new systems of assessments and transparent data collection that support student-centered, standards-based, personalized, competency education. This includes multiple measures at multiple points in the year, including formative, embedded, performance-based and validating “summative” assessments with testing windows throughout the year.
- 3 Support a research agenda that cultivates high quality online and blended learning for all learners.
- 4 Support human capital development through redesigned 21st century pre-service/in-service training of all education professionals for online and blended learning.
- 5 Ensure reliable and ubiquitous student broadband access to the Internet.

Top State Policy Needs

- 1 Shift to competency-based education from seat-time.
- 2 Increase access for each student and permit the entire continuum of student-centered, online and blended learning.
- 3 Design outcomes-based accountability and funding incentives.
- 4 Increase access to excellent, effective teachers. Support professional development for new learning models using anytime, anywhere online and blended learning. Provide true teacher license reciprocity for online teaching.
- 5 Provide room for innovation. While requiring accountability for outcomes, policy should also ensure opportunity for emerging technologies and new approaches. Care should be taken to guard against overly prescriptive inputs, policies and practices that stifle innovation.

State Funding Models for Online Learning

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

- In Arizona, full-time online schools receive 95% of the base support-level.
- Colorado funds multi-district full-time online schools at a state-set, per pupil minimum level for online students.
- Florida full-time online schools receive funding for students based on successful completion.
- In Indiana, full-time online schools receive 87.5% of the typical funding level plus any special education grants, which are calculated the same as for traditional schools.
- Louisiana online schools receive 90% of the state and local funding based on where the student resides.
- Nevada virtual schools receive the same level of funding as brick-and-mortar schools.
- Michigan full-time charter schools receive the same funding as other charter schools in the state.
- While Ohio full-time online schools are funded at the same state per-pupil funding formula as traditional schools, they do not receive local funds or poverty-based assistance funding, resulting in significantly lower total funding levels.

- In Minnesota, the funding model for full-time online learning allows the students to enroll with the district or charter school as an open enrolled full-time student. 100% of the ADM follows the student to the new (online) district / charter of the general education revenue.

The funding model for supplemental online learning includes providing .12 times ADM to the enrolling district for the % of the day (or ADM) that the student is taking online classes and .88 times ADM to the online learning provider/program for the % of the day (or ADM) the student is taking online classes.

- a. For **full-time online learning**, the student enrolls with the district or charter school as an open enrolled full time student.
 - i. 100% of the ADM follows the student to the new (online) district / charter of the general education revenue.
- b. For **supplemental online learning** the division of general education revenue is as follows:
 - i. .12 times ADM to the enrolling district for the % of the day (or ADM) that the student is taking online classes.
 - ii. .88 times ADM to the online learning provider/program for the % of the day (or ADM) the student is taking online classes.

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

- Funding following the student at the individual course level exists in a few states including Florida, Arizona, Minnesota, and Utah.
- In Florida, the Florida Virtual School receives a fixed-amount for each successful semester course enrollment and the school district’s funding is reduced for that course enrollment.
- In Utah, funding also follows the student at the high school level with successful course completion also impacting the funding. The providing district receives 50% of the funding after the withdrawal period and the remaining 50% upon the student earning course credit.

iNACOL Strategic Priorities

1 Advocacy

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

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

2 Quality

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

iNACOL is focused on establishing quality assurance standards, National Quality Standards for Online Courses, Online Teaching and Online Programs, as well as recommended reporting practices that help determine the relationship of quality inputs and student outcomes to measure the effectiveness of online courses and programs. Outcomes-based quality assurance performance metrics were established by iNACOL in 2012. iNACOL recommends that states, governing entities, oversight agencies, authorizers, and districts should require the transparent reporting of these five outcomes-based, performance metrics on student learning: 1) benchmarking proficiency, 2) individual student learning growth, 3) closing the achievement gap, 4) graduation rate, and 5) college and career readiness. iNACOL published the report, *Measuring Quality from Inputs to Outcomes: Creating Student Learning Performance Metrics and Quality Assurance for Online Schools*, to identify and establish performance-based metrics for measuring quality for both full-time programs and supplemental online courses. Understanding the relationship between evaluating courses, aligning to academic standards, and measuring student outcomes is important in determining effectiveness and an expectation within the field that “quality” courses and programs are those that improve student outcomes.

3 New Learning Models

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

iNACOL wants to accelerate the development of effective new learning models that are necessary for the field to achieve its potential. Online and blended learning models that are competency-based provide enormous potential for transforming the education system toward student-centered, personalized learning. iNACOL’s ambitious vision of online and blended learning’s potential requires research, development and publishing best practices to better understand where the field is today relative to that potential. iNACOL’s network is leading innovation in a variety of new learning models, in collaboration with one another, across the field on research, development, rapid prototyping, sharing information, tools and building capacity in the field.

References

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⁹http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2012/2012313/tables/table_03.asp.

¹⁰<http://learningbeyondtextbooks.org>.

¹¹<http://www.utahopentextbooks.org>.

¹²<http://www.competencyworks.org>.

iNACOL Events

iNACOL Blended and Online Learning Symposium: The Premier K-12 Online and Blended Learning Conference

November 4-7, 2014,
in Palm Springs, CA

Leadership Webinar Series

second Wednesday of
every month at 2:00PM ET

Teacher Talk Webinar Series

third Thursday of every month
at 6:00PM ET

Research in Review Webinar Series

third Tuesday of every month
at 3:00PM ET

For more information

inacol.org/events

iNACOL Resources

CompetencyWorks

competencyworks.org

Education Domain Blog

susanpatrick.inacol.org

Research in Review Blog

researchinreview.inacol.org/

iNACOL Quality Standards

[inacol.org/resources/publications/
national-quality-standards](http://inacol.org/resources/publications/national-quality-standards)

How to Start an Online Learning Program

onlineprogramhowto.org

Continuity of Learning Resources

inacol.org/resources/col

iNACOL Services

School and Student Needs Assessment Program (SNAP)

inacol.org/our-work/services

Online Course Review and Evaluation

inacol.org/our-work/services

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