

**MSOC LEA Member Profile
Part I: Fact Sheet**

Basic Information, Procedures and Guidelines				
<u>School System</u>	<u>MSOC Member Since:</u>	<u>Status of Procedures and Guidelines for Online Learning:</u>	<u>Actual or Planned Approval Date</u>	<u>MOU @ MSDE?</u>
Baltimore City	2003	Approved	2004	Yes
Local Contact:	Stacey Davis, SDavis1@bcps.k12.md.us			
Detailed Plans on Procedures and Guidelines for Current Year:			Already completed	
Other Comments:			None	

Online Course Needs: Strategies and Results	
Planned and Actual Strategies for Conducting Course Needs Surveys, Current Year:	
Strategies for Conducting Course Needs Surveys, Past Years:	2003-2004: Established a local curriculum review committee that will review and request inclusion of courses as per established policies.
Courses Currently Needed But Not Currently Offered:	SAT Prep Health

Online Courses Offered in Current Year:				
<u>Course Type</u>	<u>Course Name</u>	<u>Course Period</u>	<u>Enrollments</u>	<u>Course Sharing?</u>
MVLO				
<i>Grant-Supported</i>				
Other	SAT Prep	March	25	
Online Courses Offered in Past Years:				
<u>Course Type</u>	<u>Course Name</u>	<u>Course Period</u>	<u>Enrollments</u>	<u>Course Sharing?</u>
MVLO	None			
<i>Grant-Supported</i>				
Other	Novel courses for over-aged middle and high school students	ongoing		

Part II: Synopsis of MSOC Participation

Background:

- BCPSS joined the consortium in year 2 of the grant. To date, the district has not enrolled students in courses, but is getting ready to do so. The district has, however, identified guidelines for students taking online courses and has had these guidelines approved by the Chief Executive Officer.

Benefits and Impact:

- The most important benefit to date has been the opportunity to collaborate with other districts. From this collaboration, BCPSS has gained knowledge and information necessary to begin a program of online courses for students within this district. It has also provided a network of colleagues with which district representatives can interact.

Implementation Issues:

- Identifying needs and then having a clear process for implementing courses and enrolling students has been the biggest roadblock for fully moving forward with this project. It has taken almost 2 years for the district to clarify which courses are of the biggest need and to identify the students who could most benefit. These issues, however, are beginning to resolve themselves as the district is starting to begin the process of enrolling students in an SAT Prep course offered by an outside vendor.

Lessons Learned:

- The most important lesson learned from this experience is that it takes a collaborative effort on the part of the school district to fully implement an effective program of online courses. One department trying to work in isolation will not be as effective in deploying course opportunities as a collaboration of multiple departments.

Next Steps:

- Next steps for BCPSS include further identification of needed courses. The district will also work to develop a cadre of schools and teachers who are implementing online courses and who are providing additional professional development for teachers who are serving as student mentors. Additionally, BCPSS will identify teachers who can serve as online instructors and provide the staff development that they need in order to be considered “highly qualified” to teach online courses.

The Baltimore City Public School System

In its second year of participating in the MSOC project, the Baltimore City Public School System is just beginning to offer related online courses. There is great interest in offering an SAT Prep course, but this hasn't happened as of yet because the MVLO course was not ready. Instead, BCPSS is going to utilize grant funds to offer the Princeton Review's SAT Prep online course. There was some frustration noted, in that it has taken a long time to get this or any other course off the ground. Efforts are currently underway, however, to ensure that students with identified needs are given the opportunity to enroll in courses for the summer and fall.

Part of the delay was a large fiscal problem that loomed over the BCPSS. The focus was on a \$58 million budget deficit and huge staff cuts and layoffs. As the budget and climate have stabilized, however, the focus has moved back to services for students, including the attempts to implement additional online courses.

The biggest MSOC benefit has been the interaction and relationship-building with other districts. It was noted that by meeting with other districts in an on-going fashion enabled participants to network and collaborate, as well as to garner additional strategies and tips for implementing online courses. Districts that have experienced success in enrolling students in online courses have served as great role models for districts such as Baltimore that have had a difficult time implementing the numbers of courses that they expected to have available.

Regarding lessons learned, it was noted that making a systemic instructional shift such as this can be difficult for one person. Good communication processes must be in place in order to gather feedback from all stakeholders as to the needs facing the district. Additionally, support must come from all stakeholders as feedback transformed into action. BCPSS also noted that creativity must be used when planning professional development for teachers. In the past, BCPSS provided one staff development day per month for either school-based or systemic training. That model was changed during the 2004-2005 school year, so funding had to be identified to provide stipends for teachers to come to workshops and professional development activities outside of the school day and on Saturdays.

The Baltimore City Public School System has conducted some professional development activities, although not a full training program. Four teachers have taken the mentor training course, and two are just finishing taking the Teaching Online course. It was noted that teachers who took these courses will serve as trainers as additional sections of these courses are offered locally. Last summer BCPSS also hosted some short sessions about online learning and also held a meeting in early January to discuss how to get students enrolled in courses.

Despite the fact that not as many students are taking online courses as hoped at this time, BCPSS staff is still positive and hopeful that this e-learning initiative will take hold in the district and more emphasis and support will be given to this instructional model.