

MSOC LEA Member Profile

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.