

MSOC LEA Member Profile

Part III: Full Narrative -- Cecil County Public Schools

Cecil County Public School's participation in the MSOC project has been a rewarding, and at times frustrating, exercise in trying to build local interest and commitment to on-line instruction.

Students are not yet taking online courses in Cecil CPS. At this point, our content coordinators have not expressed a need for this type of instruction. Numerous attempts at building interest have come up against poor experiences that occurred prior to the MSOC project. Our goal for next year is to start again with a renewed focus on building school level as well as district level capacity.

The biggest obstacle to implementing online learning has been having the time needed to adopt and implement LEA procedures that would support our efforts. We are trying again to generate enthusiasm. The biggest issue(s) facing Cecil CPS with regard to expanding implementation of online learning has been having the time to begin to bring together the various groups that will be necessary to fully implement this project. We will need everyone on the same instructional page and that is what we are focusing our effort on for next year.

It has been very helpful to share the experiences of some of the more developed MSOC members and to carry back ideas to our local instructional leadership. We believe we are now ready to take advantage of several MSOC initiatives (mentor courses, on-line teacher courses, etc.) that will help us get this project rolling again. MSOC's support and idea sharing has been very helpful in these areas.

The most important lesson Cecil CPS has learned as a result of participating in this project is that you need buy-in from every level before a program like this can get off the ground. I believe we started without a clear target group in mind and were assuming we would get instant buy-in. That hasn't happened and we are returning to our efforts with a revised set of targets and a smaller scope. There has been a lot of interest in the concept, but still some reluctance to complete the logistical pieces necessary for implementation at both the district and individual school levels.

The small group of teachers who have taken professional development activities related to on-line learning have been very enthusiastic about their experiences. We now have at least 1 staff member instructing on-line for MVLO. It's this type of experience that we hope to grow.

It's been difficult to stay focused on this project when we have so many other initiatives currently on-going in our system. Next year, we hope to add a Coordinator for Instructional Technology whose job it will be to coordinate all of our technology integration projects. I am hopeful that this new position, devoted exclusively to instructional technology, will finally allow us to realize our potential in MSOC. It has not been the projects fault that we have not moved forward, it's that we have not taken advantage of the resources MSOC has to offer. Hopefully, that's about to change.