

MSOC LEA Member Profile Form
Part III: Full Narrative
Dorchester County Public Schools: Looking for the Right Direction

Dorchester County Public Schools had one student take a Spanish course last year offered by a local university. So far this year, DCPS hasn't had a student who wanted to take an online course. DCPS is laying the groundwork to offer more courses to more students; their current program of study has included AP courses and the MVLO courses. In the spring and summer, DCPS also plans to offer Algebra when it is available, not as a stand-alone course, but to be used with the modules in or out of class.

In the meantime, however, obstacles that impede student enrollment in on-line courses are concerns that staffing will be a problem, as using teachers as mentors in subject areas may increase the student load in face-to-face classes. Also students are not being encouraged to take the classes by teachers and guidance counselors. Being short-staffed in schools has been another obstacle this school year. Rinehart created an [online survey](#) that asks students about their possible interest in online courses, currently posted on the DCPS site. Four students filled out the survey, which has not been promoted by administrators and counselors. "One or two" showed an interest in taking online courses.

The biggest benefit from participating in the MSOC project is that the district now has "a small cadre of teachers who can do mentoring because they took the training."

One of the lessons learned is the realization of the demand required by online courses, which may be why students are not encouraged to take them by guidance counselors. To meet success students must be intrinsically motivated and have good time management skills.

Regarding professional development activities, DCPS takes advantage of whatever course that is announced. As DCPS is not in a position to write its own courses at this time, the system takes advantage of others that are being offered. Two DCPS teachers are currently enrolled in how to teach online training.

DCPS continues to search for a direction that will result in serving more students in online courses.