

MSOC LEA Member Profile -- Part II: Synopsis of MSOC Participation

Background:

- County has limited online exposure:
 - No Learning Management System available
 - Teacher email recently initiated (2003-2004).
- County needs:
 - providing alternative learning environments for the Alt. Ed. population of students with emphasis on a rolling enrollment in a virtual setting
 - implementing Triumph software to offer the SAT Prep course in 5 of the 9 county high schools.
 - providing an online community portal. Extensive training in 2004-2005 has occurred for Edline/GradeQuick in the high schools.

Benefits and Impact:

- From participation in the MSOC, the county has benefited from the experiences and knowledge of LEA's using an established virtual environment (i.e. Blackboard)
- From participation in the MSOC, at least 10 teachers have participated in some type of online learning training, an essential component to build background knowledge.
- From participation in the MSOC, county leaders have been provided the MVLO guidelines for online learning, and have used these documents to aid in the development of local guidelines.
- By partnering with MCPS, 8 students participated in the SAT online prep course.
- By partnering with MCPS, 4 teachers participated as online mentors for the SAT prep course.
- From participation in the MSOC, county leaders have knowledge of the MVLO course offerings and SAT online prep course

Implementation Issues:

- without a learning management system in place, implementation has been slowed
- without the background knowledge of providing online professional development, implementation for student coursework online has been slowed.
- Online options require additional funding
- Confirmed research that demonstrates the advantages of an online learning environment is still emerging
- High schools with limited lab space may find that offering online and hybrid courses overtaxes the system

Lessons Learned:

- An LEA should use professional development as the first arena for online learning. This provides teachers with background knowledge of the structure of online learning – and in turn – prepares them for providing online courses to students.
- An LEA without a learning management system (Blackboard, D2L) is handicapped with limited background knowledge, limited support personnel, and limited dedicated funding.
- Leaders and teachers want solutions now – and the delay in offering courses slows the momentum of interest (ex. SAT prep format change, HSA required tested courses not all available)

Next Steps:

- Continue to expand upon MOODLE as an online delivery for professional development courses.
- Work with leadership to include online opportunities for staff development and student learning in the Master Plan.
- Work with the newly appointed Coordinator of Accelerated Learning for possible opportunities for students in online AP and SAT courses.