

ONLINE LEARNING

Alabama, Florida, Idaho, Michigan and Virginia already have laws on the books requiring virtual education for graduation, and school boards in multiple districts have enacted similar provisions, including Marietta City Schools in Georgia, Memphis City Schools, and Putnam County Schools in Tennessee, and the Kenosha and Cedarburg School Districts in Wisconsin among others. The governor of Minnesota signed a law that “strongly encourages,” but falls short of requiring, students to complete at least one online course before graduating from high school.

One of the noticeable trends in high school online learning (or even K-12 online learning) is how rapidly districts are beginning to create their own range of online course options in order to increase course options for students, control costs and build for sustainability. Increasingly, districts are becoming their own providers and/or partnering with online course providers, such as Apex, Florida Virtual Schools, Connections, and/or K12. (NOTE: See Tom Vander Ark’s Getting Smart blog on “A District Guide to Online Learning” for some helpful guidelines.

<http://www.gettingsmart.com/2013/05/a-district-guide-to-online-learning/>

Another emerging trend are MOOCs. **Massive Open Online Course (MOOC)** “A Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) is an online course aimed at unlimited participation and open access via the web. In addition to traditional course materials such as videos, readings, and problem sets, MOOCs provide interactive user fora that help build a community for students, professors, and teaching assistants. MOOCs are a recent development in distance education.” - Wikipedia

Some high schools encourage students to take a free college course on line as part of a becoming college-ready learning experience. Increasingly, some teacher professional development is delivered via MOOCs.

See MOOCs: Top Ten Sites for Free Education with Elite Universities. (Includes a video about MOOCs) <http://www.bdpa-detroit.org/portal/index.php/comittees/high-school-computer-competition-hscc/29-education/57-moocs-top-10-sites-for-free-education-with-elite-universities.html>

A small sampling of online course providers for high school students:

Florida Virtual School – an online public school. (UCOP approved)

Courses are free to students who live in Florida and are available, on a tuition basis, to students who live outside the state. Over 120 courses, including advanced placement courses. Serves middle school and high school students. <http://www.flvs.net>

See **Florida** Department of Education Memorandum and Frequently Asked Questions regarding the **Online Course High School Graduation Requirement** in Florida.

<http://www.fldoe.org/eias/dataweb/tech/onlinegrad.pdf>

Michigan Virtual School <http://www.mivhs.org/> Offers courses in English Language Arts, Math, Science, Social Studies, Foreign Language, as well as Elective Courses. Course offerings include Advanced Placement courses. Offers 18-week Semester courses, 12-week Trimester courses, and 8-week Summer Courses. Offers both middle school and high school courses.

Online High School at Stanford University offers an online independent, fully accredited, diploma granting school situated at Stanford University, serving grades 7-12. Serves students from around the world. <http://www.ohs.stanford.edu> (UCOP approved)

Brigham Young University (BYU) offers an **independent study**, online educational programs with over 500 online courses – university, high school, and junior high school. (UCOP approved) <http://is.byu.edu/site/>

APEX Learning/APEX Learning Virtual School (UCOP approved) “Apex Learning is the leading provider of blended and virtual learning.”
<http://www.apexlearning.com> <http://www.apexlearning.com/virtual-learning/virtual-school>

MIT Open CourseWare (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) is free and does include courses targeted for high school students; however, the MIT Open Education courses are meant to be non-credit bearing courses – designed to “unlock knowledge and empower minds.” “The idea is simple: to publish all of our course materials online and make them widely available to everyone.” -- Dick K/P. Yue, Professor, MIT School of Engineering.

There are over 2150 courses on the site and MIT Open Courseware has had over 125 million visitors. <http://www.ocw.mit.edu/>

Other Universities (including University of Michigan, University of California Irvine, Tufts University and many others) similarly are posting free course materials online.

Rachel Carson Environmental Science Academy

Churchill High School, 4J School District, Eugene, Oregon

Pathway Program of study with some face-to-face courses; some on-line courses.

Some pathways may offer a combination of face-to-face courses and online courses. For example, the Rachel Carson Environmental Science Academy at Churchill High School in Eugene, Oregon is an 11th and 12th grade small learning community. Three of the courses offered are online classes: Technical Writing, Ecology and Botany, and Environmental Law. See

http://staff.4j.lane.edu/~haberman/Rachel_Carson/Web_Classes.html for more information.

The Rachel Carson Environmental Science Academy’s Program of Study involves the following: Year One Classes (11th grade): Rachel Carson Environmental Science, Field Studies, Ecology (web class), Botany (web class)

Year Two Classes: AP Environmental Science, Technical writing (web class),
Environmental Law (web class), Environmental Leadership Capstone Seminar (ELCS)