

MARYLAND VIRTUAL LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES PROGRAM

MARYLAND VIRTUAL
LEARNING
OPPORTUNITIES



Local School System Planning, Implementation, and Evaluation Guide

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Why Consider Using Online Courses?

The State and local school systems are facing several critical issues:

- Providing access for students to higher-level courses, such as advanced math, science, and AP courses, and to courses in which there are critical teacher shortages or low incidence enrollments;
- Expanding the access for students to high quality courses needed for graduation when the student has a scheduling conflict, is in an alternative education setting or on home and hospital instruction, or needs a course to be able to graduate within the four-year period;
- Providing equity across programs and schools in the quality of instruction;
- Having the ability to meet students' learning needs and to allow for significant variation in the amount of time that students may need to meet standards.

Online courses are being used by other states and by school systems across the nation and within Maryland to address these issues. Specifically, states and school systems are using online courses to:

- Expand the range of courses and opportunities offered to students;
- Offer courses for students when there are no qualified teachers to teach the courses;
- Allow students to take a course when there are too few students who need a certain course to be able to assign a teacher to teach that course;
- Provide courses for students who have schedules that prevent them from taking a course when it is offered;
- Present high-quality instruction to students who are in alternative education settings or on home and hospital instruction;
- Provide additional support and extended time to students who failed to achieve in regular courses;
- Allow students who are juniors or seniors and need a course to be able to graduate within the four-year period to make up that course.

Planning Considerations

PART I: The Planning Process

Prior to course enrollments, consider the following:

ORGANIZATION MANAGEMENT AND SUPPORT STRUCTURES: PLANNING			
Consider each of these areas.	Date to be completed	Date completed	Comments
1. A needs survey has been completed and the data used for planning.			
2. The school system has established guidelines as to when it will grant credit for online courses, how many courses a student may take in a semester, and how many online course credits it will accept towards meeting graduation requirements.			
3. The school or school district in which the student is enrolled will accept the course for credit.			
4. The school system has determined under what circumstances the system, school, and/or parents will pay the course fees.			
5. Procedures for fees and payment have been established and published prior to student enrollment in a course.			
6. The school system has established a system-wide procedure for reporting attendance.			
7. A system policy that addresses student access to the technology necessary to participate in online courses has been established.			
8. The school system has determined whether grades for online courses will be included in the grade point average.			
9. If the school system has a standardized end-of-course exam that is included in the student's grade for the course, the school system has determined whether students in online courses must take this exam.			
10. The school district or state department of education has reviewed the selected courses to verify that the course content and assignments are aligned with the state's content standards, standards set for AP courses, or nationally accepted content standards set for technology, computer science, or other courses whose content is not included in the state standards.			
11. The school district or state department of education has reviewed the selected course to verify that it meets the standards on the MSDE Instructional Design Rubric for Secondary Level Online Courses.			
12. The local school system or state department of education has reviewed the course to verify that the course content and assignments are aligned with the state's content standards, standards set for AP courses, or nationally accepted content standards set for technology, computer science, or other courses whose content is not included in the state standards.			
13. The school district or state department of education has reviewed the course to verify that the course assessments and tasks align with the required local, state, and national assessments that are associated with the course.			
14. The school district or state department of education has reviewed the course to assess the course's compliance with the requirements governing equivalent access consistent with Subpart B, Technical Standards, Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.			

ORGANIZATION MANAGEMENT AND SUPPORT STRUCTURES: PLANNING

Consider each of these areas.	Date to be completed	Date completed	Comments
15. If the course is to be developed, the developing institution has sufficient capacity and time to develop and pilot the course prior to its use by the school district.			
16. Guidelines for what constitutes high quality online teachers have been established and are followed. This includes teacher certification in the content taught and training in online teaching.			
17. If the school system is using its own teachers, the training for these teachers on how to teach online has been developed and is provided to these teachers prior to teaching the course.			
18. If the school system is using its own teachers, a process is in place that will support the supervision and evaluation of the online teachers.			
19. An evaluation of the online program has been designed.			
20. The responsibilities of the school system contact and school-based staff have been defined.			
21. A school system contact person has been designated and is knowledgeable about the use of online courses with students. (See ROLES and RESPONSIBILITIES section)			
22. A site-based teacher or other educator is designated to coordinate and assist students with instructional, technical, and management requirements.			
23. School-based administrators and counselors have received training on using online courses with students.			
24. Training has been provided for the site-based coordinators.			
25. School-based mentors have been identified and trained.			
26. Procedures are established to monitor students to ensure academic honesty.			
27. The course provider (commercial, state, or school system) will provide the online teacher and the site coordinator with instructional, technical and course management assistance.			
28. A system is in place for the site-based coordinator to receive monthly student process reports.			
29. Students have discussed their completed self-assessments on “Is Online Learning for Me?” with their school counselors.			
30. Parent orientation materials are provided.			
31. Student and parent orientation is scheduled.			
32. Parents have signed memos of understanding with the school, school system, or MVLO.			
33. The Tech Support staff has installed the necessary plug-ins for the course and determined that the course will run on the designated computers.			
34. The school can meet the technical requirements for acceptable access.			
35. Students will have access to necessary, relevant materials.			
36. The course delivery is coordinated with the academic calendar of the students and teacher before the course begins.			

Implementation Considerations

PART II: The Implementation Process

During the implementation, it is essential to monitor the activities related to providing online courses. Through site visits, monitoring online reports, phone conferences, surveys, and email discussions, school districts and schools can monitor the quality of the implementation.

ORGANIZATION MANAGEMENT AND SUPPORT STRUCTURE: IMPLEMENTATIONS					
Complete each of these areas.	Inadequate	Partially Adequate	Adequate	Inadequate Information	Comments
1. Policies and procedures are being followed at the system level.					
2. Policies and procedures are being followed at the school level.					
3. Procedures to monitor online teacher performance are being followed.					
4. Procedures to monitor students to ensure academic honesty are being followed.					
5. Procedures to monitor students to ensure adequate progress are being followed.					
6. The contact log of the teacher or other educator designated to coordinate and assist students indicates that he/she has been in contact with each of the students on a regular basis.					
7. The online teacher and the school coordinator indicate that the course provider is providing instructional, technical and course management assistance as needed.					
8. Training was provided for the site-based coordinators, mentors, counselors, administrators.					
9. Parents indicate that the online teacher has been in contact with them to report student progress.					
10. The students indicate that they are receiving the instructional and technical support needed to succeed.					
11. Students indicate that they have access to necessary, relevant materials.					
12. Access to the course has been sufficiently free of technical difficulties that the students can adequately access the course.					
13. Formative data is being collected for the evaluation and to improve implementation.					

Evaluation Considerations

PART III: The Evaluation Process

The use of multiple evaluation measures following the completion of the course(s) should be used to determine the effectiveness of the implementation of the distance learning project and of the course.

EVALUATION OF DISTANCE LEARNING PROJECT AND OF THE DL COURSES					
To what extent does the implementation of the distance learning project and of the courses meet the criteria in this area?	Considerations	Does Not Meet Criteria	Barely Meets Criteria	Meets Criteria	Inadequate Information
1. The effectiveness of the implementation of the online course is measured by student completion rates.					
2. The effectiveness of the online course is measured by student performance on assessments built into the course.					
3. The effectiveness of the online course is measured by student performance on required assessments.					
4. Sufficient technical support was provided to meet student needs.					
5. End of course surveys by students and parents indicate level of satisfaction with course content, instructional activities, course assessments, online teacher support, and site-based support.					
6. Teacher performance evaluation is conducted.					
7. Student participation and performance is verified.					

Roles and Responsibilities

A. Local School System Contact

Each participating local school system should identify one contact person, the Local School System Contact, who is responsible for coordinating online courses and services at the system level.

Local School System Contact Key Responsibilities include:

- Provide information to schools, students, parent/guardian, and staff regarding MVLO offerings;
- Coordinate correspondence between the school system central office and The Maryland Virtual Learning Opportunities program;
- Collaborate with MVLO staff in providing inservice training to site-based coordinators and others in the schools in which students are taking classes through MVLO;
- Coordinate practices/policies at system level including:
 - Communication
 - Agreement on decisions
 - Monitoring
 - Problem solving;
- Work with central office information technology staff to ensure that the school system network will permit access to the MVLO courses;
- Work with curriculum staff on which courses are approved for use within the school system;
- Coordinate the budget related items;
- Communicate with the MVLO Coordinator to provide feedback on the quality of the courses and instruction and the satisfaction level of the school system.

B. School-based Roles

Each of the following roles contributes to a successful experience for students. A school-based mentor is strongly recommended but not required. All other roles are required.

School Principal

The principal of the school provides the leadership for the use of online courses at the local school.

School Principal Key Responsibilities include:

- Understand the concept of online courses and the roles of staff in supporting the use of online courses;
- Allocate, assign, and supervise staff;
- Implement the pertinent county and state policies and practices;
- Participate in staff development provided by the school system in how to supervise and evaluate site-based staff;
- Provide training for staff as needed;
- Approve the determination of which students and which course;
- Understand student needs based on feedback on master schedule.

School Site Coordinator

Each participating school will identify one contact person, the School Site Coordinator, who is responsible for coordinating MVLO services at the local school.

School Site Coordinator Key Responsibilities include:

- Provide information to students, parents/guardians, and staff regarding MVLO offerings;
- Serve as a liaison with principal and keep the principal informed;
- Provide requested information and other documentation to the MVLO Coordinator;
- Work with guidance staff to determine whether there is a match between the students' needs and the use of online courses;
- Work with MSDE and local school system staff to provide an orientation to learning online for parents and students;
- Ensure that the proper grade and credit information for the online course are recorded in the student's record;
- Ensure that copies of any failure warning letters are filed in the student files in the Guidance Office;
- Coordinate the securing of student services as needed;
- Review the bi-weekly/monthly progress reports;
- Coordinate the proctoring of any MVLO exams;
- Work with local technical staff to ensure that all MVLO students have access to and assistance in using necessary equipment and software;
- Check with the student to see if the necessary course materials have been received and are functional;
- Notify the MVLO Coordinator if it appears that the student will need to drop the course within 7 school days (2 school days during the summer) of the student being granted access to the course;
- Communicate with the MVLO Coordinator to provide feedback on the quality of the courses and instruction and the satisfaction level of the students and parent/guardians.

Site-based Technology Coordinator

The work of the Site-based Technology Coordinator is accomplished primarily before the courses begin.

Site-based Technology Coordinator Key Responsibilities include:

- Work with the School Site Coordinator to determine which computers meet the courses requirements;
- Configure the work stations designated for each course;
- Run the demonstration courses for each provider to make sure they work prior to the student starting the course;
- Check the fax machine to see if it meets the course requirements;
- Provide ongoing technical support as needed.

Mentor

The mentor works directly with the student to provide encouragement and weekly monitoring.

Mentor Key Responsibilities include:

- Check weekly with the student to see how the student is progressing and provide support as needed;
- Liaison with online instructor, parent, and student;
- Check the course statistics weekly;
- Review the online course calendar and assignments;
- Proctor face-to-face exams.

Guidance

The guidance counselor knows the students' program and scheduling needs and reviews online courses in this context.

Guidance Key Responsibilities include:

- Provide information to students regarding online courses, scheduling, and registration;
- Determine good candidates for courses;
- Determine courses needed by students based on scheduling and on other needs;
- Monitor and record student grades.