

## Program profiles

Online programs continue to proliferate, both in the number of programs and the types of programs. This section presents four types of programs and their common attributes among these programs, and then provides short profiles of a few programs in each category. The tables present representative online programs in each category and do not include all such programs in the country.

### State virtual schools

State virtual schools and state-led online initiatives are created by legislation or by a state-level agency. They are often, but not always, administered by a state education agency, and usually funded by a state appropriation or grant for the purpose of providing online learning opportunities to students across the state. They may also receive federal or private foundation grants, and sometimes charge course fees to help cover their operating costs. Most of these programs are supplemental, offering courses for students who are otherwise enrolled in a traditional school setting, and are not diploma-granting.

#### Most state-led programs share the following attributes:

- **Size:** Most had a few thousand to about 16,000 course enrollments (one student taking one semester-long course) in 2008-09.
- **Funding:** Funded primarily by legislative appropriation, sometimes supplemented by charging course fees.
- **Grade level:** Grade levels are primarily high school, with some middle school.
- **Full-time students:** Few or no full-time students; provide supplemental courses to students who are enrolled in another school full time.
- **Organization type:** Run by or within the state education agency.

#### Exceptions to the common attributes above include:

- **Size:** Florida Virtual School is roughly five times larger than any other state-led program, and ten times larger than most, with 154,125 course registrations in 2008-09.
- **Funding:** The growth of FLVS is in part due to its funding, which is based on public FTE funds. Any high school student in Florida can choose an FLVS course without restriction, and the funding tied to that student goes to FLVS. No other state-led program has this funding model.
- **Grade level:** Very few state-led programs offered elementary school in 2008-09; exceptions include the Missouri Virtual Instruction Program (MoVIP) and FLVS (in conjunction with Connections Academy)
- **Full-time students:** MoVIP and FLVS have full-time students, mostly in their K-5 programs.
- **Organization type:** Colorado Online Learning and the Michigan Virtual School are (or are part of) non-governmental, non-profit organizations. Idaho Digital Learning Academy is a government entity but is recognized (by legislation passed in 2008) as existing outside the state education agency.

## State virtual schools<sup>37</sup>

The programs listed in the following table are representative of state virtual schools but are not a complete list of all such schools in the country.

Program name	Start date	Governance	# Course enrollments	Grade levels	Full-time students?	# Courses, % licensed
Alabama ACCESS	Fall 2005	SEA	28,014	9-12	No	68, 59%
Arkansas Virtual High School	Spring 2000	SEA	5,363	9-12	No	42, no data on % licensed
Colorado Online Learning	Fall 1999	Independent NGO with partial state funding	1,777	9-12	No	70, 0%
Florida Virtual School	Fall 1997	Special school district	154,125	6-12	Yes, 6,264	124, 3%
Georgia Virtual School	Fall 2005	SEA	9,793	6-12	No	107, 10 courses were purchased and customized
Idaho Digital Learning Academy	Fall 2002	Gov't entity outside SEA	9,646	6-12	No	125, 1%
Louisiana Virtual School	Fall 2000	SEA (State Board of Education)	11,058	6-12	No	56, 14%
Illinois Virtual High School	Spring 2001	SEA	4,039	6-12	No	117, 24%
Michigan Virtual School	2000	NGO – state-funded 501c3	16,000	6-12	No	175, less than 10%
Mississippi Virtual Public School	Fall 2006	SEA	7,019	6-12	No	139, 100%
Missouri Virtual Instruction Program	Fall 2007	SEA	15,810	6-12	Yes, 686	236, 100%
North Carolina Virtual Public School	Summer 2007	SEA	15,721	6-12	No	123, 6%
South Carolina Virtual School	Fall 2007	SEA	10,298	9-12	No	Course count not listed, 50%
Virtual Virginia	Fall 2004	SEA	4,813	6-12	No	46, 34%
Wisconsin Virtual School	2000	LEA	1,762	6-12	Yes, 34	186, 100%
West Virginia Virtual School	Fall 2001	SEA	1,504	6-12	No	161, 98%

<sup>37</sup> Most of the data are based on the *Keeping Pace* 2009 program survey, which was developed and collected in conjunction with the Southern Regional Education Board. SEA means state education agency; LEA is local education agency; NGO is non-profit, non-governmental organization. For summer 2008 through spring 2009, one course enrollment is one student taking one semester-long course.

## Full-time, multi-district programs

Full-time online schools, sometimes called cyber schools, are online learning programs in which students enroll and earn credit and diplomas issued by the online school.

### Many full-time, multi-district programs share the following attributes:

- **Organization type:** Organized as a charter school that is often chartered by a district.
- **Affiliation:** Many schools are affiliated with a national organization, such as Connections Academy, K12 Inc., or Insight Schools, that provides courses, software, teacher professional development, and other key management and logistical support.
- **Geographic reach:** Attract students from across the entire state, in order to achieve scale; therefore most of these schools are in states that allow students to enroll across district lines and have funding follow the student.
- **All grade levels** are offered in online schools collectively, although individual schools may be limited to older or younger students.
- **Funding** is often provided via state public education funds that follow the student, though some are funded through appropriations, fees, or grants.
- **Enrollments:** Most have few or no part-time students, and most have enrollment of a few hundred to several thousand students (FTE).

### Exceptions to the common attributes above include:

- **Organization type:** Some states that do not have charter schools have districts that are offering online schools to students across the state. In some states such as Colorado, multi-district programs are a mix of charter schools and district programs.
- **Affiliation:** There are many online schools that are not affiliated with a national organization. Most of these are independent.
- **Geographic reach:** Multi-district schools in California are limited to drawing students from contiguous counties.
- **Funding:** Some states, for example Colorado, have established funding levels for online students that are different than funding for students in physical schools.

## Full-time, multi-district programs

National education management organizations operating full-time online schools					
Name	Start date	States in which company operates schools	Grade levels	# FTE enrollments	Part-time students?
Advanced Academics	2000	Full-time schools in California, Washington, Minnesota, Alaska, Nevada, and Oklahoma; additional programs with districts in 30 states	6-12	Not available	Yes
Connections Academy	Fall 2002	Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Idaho, Minnesota, Nevada, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Texas, Wisconsin and Wyoming	K-12	20,000	No
K12 Inc.	1999	Arizona, Arkansas, California, Chicago, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Indiana, Idaho, Kansas, Minnesota, Nevada, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Texas, Utah, Washington, Wisconsin, and District of Columbia	K-12	56,000	No
Insight Schools	Fall 2006	California, Washington, Idaho, Oregon, Kansas, Colorado, Minnesota, and Wisconsin	9-12	Not available	No
iQ Academy	Fall 2003	Arizona, California, Kansas, Minnesota, Nevada, South Carolina, Texas, Washington, and Wisconsin	3-12	3,822	Yes, at some schools
Kaplan Virtual Education	2007	Florida, California, Washington, Wisconsin, Oregon, Colorado, Kansas, Arizona and Idaho	6-12	5,000	No

Full-time online schools						
Name	Start date	Organization type	# FTE enrollments	Part-time students?	Grade levels	Growth rate
Minnesota Virtual High School (Advanced Academics)	2007	Run by a district	Between 2,000-2,999	Primarily full-time	6-12	Increase more than 50%
Ohio Connections Academy	Fall 2003	Charter	Between 1,000-1,999	Primarily full-time	K-12	Increase between 25-50%
Oregon Virtual Academy (example K12 school)	Fall 2008	Charter	Between 250-499	Primarily full-time	K-8	Increase more than 50%
iSucceed Virtual High School (Insight School in Idaho)	Fall 2008	Charter	Between 500-749	Primarily full-time	9-12	Increase more than 50%
iQ Academy Kansas	Fall 2007	Run by a district	Between 250-499	A mix of full-time and part-time	6-12	Increase more than 50%
Pennsylvania Cyber Charter School	Fall 2000	Charter	Between 7,499-9,999	Primarily full-time	K-12	Increase 5-10%
Hope Online Learning Academy CO-OP (CO)	Fall 2005	Charter	3,944	Primarily full-time	K-12	No change
Primavera Online High School (AZ)	Summer 2003	Charter	3,300	About 2,800 full-time and 6,000 part-time	9-12	Increase 10-25%
Insight School of Washington	Fall 2006	Run by a district	1,800	Primarily full-time	9-12	Increase 25-50%
TRIO Wolf Creek Distance Learning Charter School	Summer 2002	Charter	435	Yes, 63	9-12	Increase 5-10%

## Single-district programs

Single-district programs serve students who reside within the district that is providing the online courses.

### Most single-district programs share the following attributes:

- Mostly supplemental, with some serving full-time students.
- Funded primarily by the district out of public FTE funds that are intermingled between the online program and the rest of the district. In most cases, there is no difference in funding between online and students in the physical setting.
- Grade levels are primarily high school, with some middle school.
- Often combine fully online and face-to-face components.
- Often include a focus on credit recovery or at-risk students.

### Exceptions to the common attributes above include:

- Several of the supplemental programs also serve full-time students. Clark County School District Virtual High School and Fairfax County Public Schools Online Campus both accept some full-time students, as does Broward Virtual School, though these students make up a small percentage of the overall course enrollments. Transition High School is a special school focusing on incarcerated, expelled, or truant students and serves full-time and supplemental students.
- In a few states with limits on students enrolling across district lines, single-district full-time online schools have emerged. One example is the Chicago Virtual Charter School.

## Consortium and other programs

There are a number of innovative online programs that do not fall neatly into state virtual school, full-time school, or single-district program designations. In most cases, these programs work collaboratively with school districts across one or more states, and in the case of the Virtual High School Global Consortium, across the country and the world.

Single-district programs				
Name	Start date	Grade levels	# Course enrollments or students	Growth rate
Chicago Public Schools Distance Learning	Fall 2001	6-12	Supplemental; 6,012 course enrollments	Increase 25-50%
Los Angeles Virtual Academy	Spring 2005	9-12	Supplemental; 620 course enrollments	Increase 10-25%
Fairfax County Public Schools Online Campus (VA)	Fall 2000	6-12	Supplemental; 1,200 course enrollments	Increase 10-25%
Cobb Virtual Academy (GA)	Summer 2001	9-12	Supplemental; 1,803 course enrollments	Increase 5-10%
Riverside Virtual School (CA)	Fall 2006	6-12	Supplemental with small full-time component; 1,484 course enrollments	Increase more than 50%
Hamilton County Virtual School (TN)	Summer 2005	K-12	Supplemental; 821 course enrollments	Increase 10-25%
West Bend School District Virtual Program (WI)	Spring 2009	9-12	Supplemental; 100 course enrollments	NA; program started in 2009
Broward Virtual School (FL)	Fall 2001	6-12	Primarily full-time; 3,982 students	Increase 10-25%
Pasadena Virtual School (TX)	2005	6-12	Supplemental; 357 course enrollments	Increase 25-50%
Miami-Dade Virtual School (FL)	Summer 2003	6-12	Supplemental; 900 course enrollments	No change (within 5% of the previous year)
Pacific Coast High School (CA)	1997	9-12	Supplemental with small full-time component; 4,580 course enrollments	No change (within 5% of the previous year)

Consortium programs						
Name	Organization type	Start date	Grade levels	Funding	# Course enrollments or students	Growth rate
Virtual High School Global Consortium (VHS)	Independent non-governmental	Fall 1997	6-12	Course fees and collaborative model; member schools pay an administrative fee and pay for professional development	Supplemental; 11,902 course enrollments	Increase 10-25%
Wisconsin eSchool Network	Independent non-governmental	Spring 2002	6-12	Education formula funding and grants	Both supplemental and full-time; between 1,000-1,499 students	Increase 10-25%

## Profiles of representative state virtual schools, online charter schools, education management organizations, and consortium programs

### Advanced Academics EDUCATION MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATION

Advanced Academics partners with schools and districts in more than 30 states, with eighteen full-time online programs in six states (California, Washington, Minnesota, Alaska, Nevada, and Oklahoma). The company's largest full-time programs include Minnesota Virtual High School, Oklahoma Virtual High School, Delta Pacific Online Charter School, Fairbanks BEST, the WOLF program in Reno, NV, and the SoCal Online School Network. Advanced Academics is a subsidiary of DeVry Inc.

### Alabama ACCESS Distance Learning STATE VIRTUAL SCHOOL

The ACCESS Distance Learning program began in October 2005, is supplemental, and is run by the Alabama Department of Education. Three regional support centers hire, train, and support the teachers. The program is available to all public high school students and is free for these schools and students. Course enrollments have grown from approximately 7,300 in 2006-07 to more than 28,000 course enrollments in 2008-09, with another 15,000 non-credit course enrollments. The program does not focus on any particular type of student or courses but offers all ranges of courses. ACCESS offers 68 unique courses with approximately 59% purchased from out-of-state vendors. Five remediation modules for the Alabama High School Graduation Exam are also available to no cost to all students in the state.

### Branson (CO) School Online MULTI-DISTRICT ONLINE SCHOOL

Branson School Online was established within Branson School District RE-82 in 2001. Highly qualified teachers and administrative staff provide a full-time educational option for students in grades K-12 throughout the state of Colorado. The school and students are supported by two full-time school counselors and an active Parent Advisory and Accountability Committee. For the 2009-10 school years the enrollment is expected to be approximately 450 students.

### Cobb Virtual Academy (GA) SINGLE DISTRICT ONLINE PROGRAM

Cobb Virtual Academy (CVA) began serving students in a metro school district of Atlanta in 2001. Since then, the online course program has served almost 8,000 students in 50 high school courses. Online students take courses as part of their state-reported school schedule or outside the school day as tuition students. In 2006, CVA began supporting teachers who wished to move to a blended learning environment. In a blended learning classroom, students receive daily, face-to-face instruction that is supplemented with the online component allowing learning to continue past the traditional school day. This school year over 450 teachers and 5,000 students will participate in a blended learning classroom.

### Colorado Online Learning STATE VIRTUAL SCHOOL

Colorado Online Learning (COL) is an independent non-profit organization serving as the supplemental online high school course provider for the state of Colorado. Founded in 1998, COL had 1,777 course enrollments for the 2008-09 school year. COL offers 70 courses that are taught by Colorado-licensed, high-qualified teachers. Over 85% of COL teachers hold advanced degrees, and they serve as instructors in courses with student-to-teacher ratios of 17:1 or less.

## Connections Academy EDUCATION MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATION

Connections Academy operates full-time K-12 online schools in 14 states (Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Idaho, Minnesota, Nevada, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Texas, Wisconsin and Wyoming), with more than 25,000 students enrolled in 2009-10. In addition, Connections Academy provides individual online courses for schools, districts and families, and also serves students through an accredited national virtual private school. The first Connections Academy-affiliated schools launched in fall 2002.

## Florida Virtual School STATE VIRTUAL SCHOOL

Florida Virtual School (FLVS) is a supplemental online program, serving students throughout Florida and around the globe. FLVS serves students in grades 6-12 and has partnered with Connections Academy to serve K-5 students in response to Florida House Bill 7067. FLVS is the largest K-12 online learning program in the nation with more than 150,000 half-credit course completions, and more than 120,000 physical students. Operating as an independent school district designed to serve the entire state, FLVS is funded through public FTE dollars, with full funding contingent upon student success. FLVS successfully serves a wide spectrum of students, including academically advanced, average, learning recovery, and struggling learners.

## Georgia Virtual School STATE VIRTUAL SCHOOL

Georgia Virtual School (GaVS), established in May 2005, offers a wide-variety of courses to Georgia middle and high school students. Georgia Virtual School serves public, private, and homeschool students with 107 courses. From summer 2008 through spring 2009, GaVS had 4,861 unique students and 9,793 course enrollments. This enrollment increased almost 40% over the previous year. GaVS has added several new supplemental programs including AP Practice Tests, Middle School Math Remediation Resource, and CRCT Remediation.

## Hamilton Country Virtual School (TN) SINGLE DISTRICT ONLINE PROGRAM

Hamilton County Virtual School (HCVS) was established in 2003 as a district-led program that serves K-12 public and private students in Hamilton County, TN. It serves approximately 1,000 students per year and works in partnership with the City of Chattanooga and the Chattanooga Housing Authority to offer facilitated labs in community locations. HCVS also offers nearly 100 virtual dual enrollment courses to students in a number of districts through its partnership with Chattanooga State Technical Community College. HCVS offers its full catalog year round but has its largest enrollment in the summer, serving as the district's only summer school remediation program.

## Hope Online (Colorado) MULTI-DISTRICT ONLINE SCHOOL

Hope Online Learning Academy Co-Op is a public charter school that offers online curriculum, individual learning plans and highly qualified teachers, combined with an unusual model of one-on-one mentoring and support at a Learning Center. With over 50 Learning Centers, Hope Online serves full-time K-12 students across Colorado's Front Range.

## Idaho Digital Learning Academy STATE VIRTUAL SCHOOL

Idaho Digital Learning Academy is a statewide online program, acting as a supplemental service to Idaho public school districts since 2002. With 98% of Idaho districts participating, IDLA served over 9,646 course enrollments in the 2008-09 school year, including high numbers of students who indicated the particular courses available through IDLA were not offered at their local districts.

## Illinois Virtual School STATE VIRTUAL SCHOOL

The Illinois Virtual School (IVS) is operated by the Peoria County Regional Office of Education on behalf of the Illinois State Board of Education. IVS, launched in 2001, places an emphasis on reaching disadvantaged students as it was created to provide students equity of access to educational offerings regardless of where they live. IVS is a supplemental program, providing a wide variety of online courses (core courses, electives, AP and other advanced courses) to public, private, and homeschooled students in high school and middle school throughout Illinois. From summer 2008 to spring 2009, IVS had slightly over 4,000 semester enrollments.

## Insight Schools EDUCATION MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATION

Insight Schools operates 9 high schools in 8 states (California, Washington, Idaho, Oregon, Kansas, Colorado, Minnesota, and Wisconsin). Insight Schools are public online high schools serving grades 9-12. Insight's schools experienced over 70% enrollment growth from fall 2008 to fall 2009. Insight Schools, Inc. is a subsidiary of Apollo Group, Inc., operator of University of Phoenix.

## K12 Inc. EDUCATION MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATION

K12 Inc. is the largest operator of full-time online schools in the country, with schools in Arizona, Arkansas, California, Chicago, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Indiana, Idaho, Kansas, Minnesota, Nevada, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Texas, Utah, Washington state, Wisconsin, and the District of Columbia. New schools are opening in 2009 in Oklahoma, Wyoming and Alaska. Total student enrollments in the 2008-09 school year were approximately 56,000. In addition, K<sup>12</sup> works with numerous schools and districts across the country to create full-time and supplemental online programs and classroom-based programs. K12 Inc. began in 1999 and the first partner schools opened in 2001.

## Michigan Virtual School™ STATE VIRTUAL SCHOOL

The Michigan Virtual School (MVS) is a division of Michigan Virtual University, a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization that works in partnership with K-12 schools to supplement and expand online learning opportunities. The MVS was created by Public Act 230 of 2000 to serve both traditional and nontraditional students. Since its inception the MVS has served over 64,000 course enrollments, including more than 16,000 in 2008-09. The MVS offers a broad range of core academic courses aligned with state standards, college level equivalent courses, remedial, enrichment and world language courses and innovative online experiences. Other services include Michigan LearnPort®, a statewide Web-based professional development system that serves over 45,000 registered Michigan educators with online courses and training.

## Missouri Virtual Instruction Program STATE VIRTUAL SCHOOL

MoVIP began classes August 2007. Missouri laws make MoVIP one of the most comprehensive programs. MoVIP has full-time and part-time students across all grade levels (K-12) and serves both public and private students. MoVIP is run by the Missouri Department of Education and hires outside vendors to provide the courseware and teachers. All 115 counties in Missouri have students participating. About 27% of MoVIP students are full-time and 73% of students are part-time. Only 2% of the secondary students are full-time. The comprehensive nature of the program requires a focus on all types of students.

## Omaha Public School eLearning Program (NE) SINGLE DISTRICT ONLINE PROGRAM

Omaha Public School eLearning Program is a school district program that began in the fall 2006 to meet the needs of credit recovery students. The eLearning Program has expanded to over 9,600 course enrollments in classroom lab settings for credit recovery to supplemental blended learning courses for classroom teachers to use in conjunction with face-to-face instruction in grades 2-12. District curriculum resources such as multimedia, primary source documents, lesson plans, lesson resources, and curriculum guides for grades P-12 are housed in learning object repositories for staff access.

## Riverside (CA) Virtual School SINGLE DISTRICT ONLINE PROGRAM

The Riverside Virtual School (RVS) is a public school that offers online classes for students in Southern California. RVS offers increased access to online learning resources in traditional classrooms, as well as academic support for homeschooled students. RVS also enrolls full-time students statewide in a college preparatory program designed to incorporate hands-on experiences with local businesses and universities.

## Virtual Virginia STATE VIRTUAL SCHOOL

Virtual Virginia is the combination of two former distance education programs, the Virginia Satellite Education Network and the Virginia Virtual Advanced Placement School. During the 2006-07 school year the two programs merged to form Virtual Virginia. In this merger, instruction moved to full online teaching and learning through a unified course management system. Initially, distance learning programs were designed to meet the needs of rural and underserved students by providing access to more advanced coursework. The current course catalog reflects their initial mission with 23 Advanced Placement courses, three pre-AP courses, and 16 world language courses not typically found in local school world language offerings.

## Virtual High School Global Consortium CONSORTIUM

Virtual High School Global Consortium is an educational nonprofit which partners with schools to expand their course offerings. Founded in 1996, VHS is a collaborative of nearly 600 schools in 28 states and 35 countries. In 2008-09, VHS had more than 12,000 course registrations in over 150 middle and high school VHS courses, including Advanced Placement, core, elective, credit-recovery and International Baccalaureate courses. The mission of VHS is to develop and deliver standards-based, student-centered online courses to expand students' educational opportunities and 21<sup>st</sup> century skills and to offer professional development to teachers to expand the scope and depth of their training.

## Wisconsin eSchool Network CONSORTIUM

Wisconsin eSchool Network formed as a nonprofit organization during the 2006-07 school year as a means for local online schools and programs to share resources and experiences. The Network currently includes charter schools and programs in eight school districts across the state, and had over 3,400 course enrollments during the 2008-09 school year. The schools are funded through public FTE funds at the same rate as brick-and-mortar schools and in some cases initially through federal charter school implementation grants. The Network is unique in that it provides each Network Partner the autonomy to design and implement the online learning program that best meets their unique needs. Some districts only offer courses during the traditional school year, others have defined separate summer sessions, and one is a year-round school.