

**Legislative Budget Board
Survey of Online Learning Programs in Texas**

**Northside Independent School District
September 15, 2008**

August, 2008

The Legislative Budget Board staff is doing a report on the new Texas virtual school network administered by the Texas Education Agency and other organizations. To help us provide the legislature with useful information, we would like you to complete the following survey and the spreadsheet. The spreadsheet is attached to the email which sent you this survey. Information about returning the survey and spreadsheet and contacting LBB staff are at the bottom of this document. Thank you!

Please provide answers under each of the questions.

1. Please provide a brief overview of your virtual school. A copy of any documents that describe your school, or a link to a webpage that has this information is sufficient.

Answer: We have developed two fully online courses, in-house, for high school credit: Web Mastering Online (1 credit) and Health Online (1/2 credit). A third course, Music Appreciation Online (1 credit), is currently online but delivered in a hybrid model (online and face-to-face) within the school day. Students do not pay a fee to participate in these courses.

2. Who may take your courses from your virtual school:
Please check those that apply

Students from your district only

And addition to students in your district:

Students from districts in a consortium or shared service arrangement ____

Students from other school districts and charter schools, in general ____

Private school students _____

Home-schooled students ____

3. Please identify the school districts, charter schools, and private schools that your online school serves. The individual campus names are not necessary.

Answer: Northside ISD in San Antonio, TX.

4. Please provide a web link or copy of your course list, descriptions, and fees.

Answer: All three courses (Web Mastering Online, Music Appreciation Online, and Health Online) adhere to the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), but have been adapted for the online learner utilizing the Moodle Course Management System.

5. In which school year did you first start providing online courses?

Answer: 2001-2002, Web Mastering Online.

6. How many students enrolled in your courses in school year 2007-2008 (ie unique number), including summer school? Please provide a total for high school and another for middle school.

Answer:

High School Students: 76 in 2007-2008; 155 in 2008-2009
2007-2008: 1 section of Web Mastering Online (33 students); in addition, we had 2 blended sections of Music Appreciation Online (43 students).
2008-2009: 24 in Web Mastering Online, 27 in Music Appreciation Online, 104 in Health Online.

Middle School Student: 0

7. How many course registrations did you have in the fall and spring semester of school year 2007-2008, and then for summer 2008? If summer 2008 data is not available, summer 2007 will do. Please provide a total for high school and middle school.

Answer:

Total registrations, Fall 2007 and Spring 2008: 76

Total registrations, Summer 2008, or if unavailable, 2007: N/A
(Please specify with year)

8. How many registrations were successfully completed in those two periods, by high school and for middle school students?

Answer:

High School Students: 63

Middle School Student: 0

9. How many high school students, and how many middle school students, were enrolled in your school district in school year 2007-2008? If it will take several

days to obtain this data, please skip it. Also, this question may not apply if your program serves a substantial number of students from several districts.

Answer:

High School Students: 25,235

Middle School Student: 20,150

10. How long do students have to complete a course? Please check one.

- a. In the same length of time as all other students ✓
- b. Online students have to complete a course by a certain number of weeks after the semester (half credit) or school year (full credit) ends _____. Please specify the number of weeks. _____.
- c. The completion period is flexible, it can depend the course or student _____

11. If state funding for course fees was provided on the basis of either course completions or on course progress, which approach would you favor and why?

Answer: Course progress would help cover our efforts in addressing the needs of students who express an interest in beginning a course – but lack the staying power to finish a course.

12. How do you think progress should be measured?

Answer: Passing grades in two semester grading cycles of a one-credit course or in one semester grading cycle of a half-credit course.

13. If your online learning program has a budget or financial report that shows a breakdown of expenditures into specific categories (personnel, network costs, etc), please provide that for school year 2006-2007, or 2007-2008 if its available. If that's unavailable, then the total operating cost (including personnel), and any specific expenditure data you may have, for the most recent school for which data are available, will suffice.

Answer:

Annual \$2,900 teaching stipend for Web Mastering teacher since 2001-2002, slightly higher individually calculated stipends based on daily rate being used for new online teachers for 2008-2009. First-year start-up costs for this course were \$21,450 (Curriculum Development, \$7,000; Staff Development, \$100; Media, \$250; Web Server, \$5,000; Instructors' Stipends, \$8,700; Publishing Costs (in-house), \$400.

Course development costs for the other two new courses were approximately \$7452 each (professional extra duty pay).

14. How many full-time equivalent employees are involved in providing the services of your online program?

Answer: In addition to writers/developers for new content (3) and teachers (5), three staff members are called upon frequently as one part of their overall job duties (with others involved occasionally). The answer for last year would have been two staff members.

15. What other online related programs or grants administered by the state or federal government are you participating in currently?

Answer: N/A

16. Did any of those programs or grants provide your program enough funding to reduce or eliminate the course fee a student would have had to pay otherwise?

Answer: No, N/A

17. There is a spreadsheet, titled "Courses, Fees, Registrations" attached to this email. Please complete it and send it along with the information requested above.

Comment: Since student registration/enrollment fees are not part of our model, and registration numbers are included above, we are not sending the spreadsheet.

Please return this survey and the spreadsheet by September 17th to Robert Norris, Legislative Budget Board, at robert.norris@lbb.state.tx.us .

We really appreciate the information you provide. Thank you!

Feel free to contact Robert at 512-463-1179 if you have questions or comments.

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Follow-up Questions**

October, 2008

Thanks again for the responses you gave on the survey you submitted in September.

Would you please answer five follow-up questions?

1. How many teachers provided instruction through your online learning program during school year 2007-2008?

Three teachers.

2. Did your program develop its own curriculum or learning management system, or did it purchase such a system?

We use the Moodle Course Management System.

3. If it was purchased, from whom did you purchase it, and how much did it cost?

Moodle is a free, open-source course management product. We have spent approximately \$10,000 on server equipment to host our three online courses. Server administration is performed in-house by a professional, technical staff member.

4. Are you able to identify the number of students enrolled in your online learning program during school year 2008-2007 who were eligible or participated in the federal free and reduced price lunch program?

Yes.

5. If so, please provide the number of students enrolled in your program last school year who were either (a) eligible for the federal lunch program (preferred); or (b) participated in the lunch program.

Seven students.

I would appreciate it if you would send me your responses by Friday October 17th. Please feel free to call me if you have questions: 512-463-1179.

My email address is: robert.norris@lbb.state.tx.us .

Thank you!

Robert Norris,
Legislative Budget Board