Improving Graduation Rates Through Virtual Schooling

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“Disrupting Class”
by Christensen, Horn, & Johnson (2008)

- Adoption of online learning follows a disruptive pattern in which the new innovation substitutes for the old paradigm.
- Online courses taken increased from 45,000 to 1,000,000 from 2000-2007.
- Christensen projects up to 50% of high school courses will be taken online by 2019!
Enablers of Disruption

1. Computer-based learning will keep improving in richness and interactivity
2. Individualization and customization will allow for true student-centric learning
3. Graying of the baby-boomers will lead to teacher shortages
4. Delivery costs will fall as usage scales
1. 75% of responding school districts offer online or blended learning
2. 66% expect online enrollments to grow
3. 2007-08 online enrollments grew 47% to 1,030,000 students
4. Online learning is meeting a wide range of needs from credit recovery to AP
5. Districts typically depend on multiple online learning providers
6. Online learning is a lifeline for rural districts
Types of Virtual Schools

- State-led virtual schools
- Full-time multi-district schools (cyber schools, online charter schools)
- Single-district programs
- Consortiums
Future of Online Learning – Dr. Bill Daggett

Online Learners

- Online Schools
- Traditional Schools

- Online Courses
- Traditional Courses

Combine Traditional and Online Courses

Professional Development

Solutions to the Drop out Crisis

National Dropout Prevention Center/Network at Clemson University
A New Partnership Model

Virtual Schools → Virtual Schooling
Goals of Virtual Schooling

• Keeping dollars in the public schools
• Meeting individual learner needs
• Engaging students in the learning process
• Keeping students in school
• Helping students graduate
• Preparing students for productive careers and success in postsecondary education
Research-based Strategies from the NDPC/N

- Alternative Education
- Educational Technology
- Career and Technical Education
- Mentoring and meaningful adult relationships
- Active Learning
- Individualized Instruction
Choosing a Virtual Schooling Partner

- Accreditation and licensure
- Certified and expert teachers
- Curriculum breadth and state-alignment
- Rich and engaging student interface
- Communication between stakeholders
- No / Low technology support requirements
- Ample professional development
- Cost effectiveness
Evaluating Virtual Partners with RRR

**R**igor – objectives-based, standards-aligned, program breadth including AP and credit recovery

**R**elevance – 21st Century and 2.0 skills, CTE offerings

**R**elationships – certified teachers, mentoring, stakeholder interactivity, local support
National Standards of Quality for Online Courses (NACOL)

A. Content
B. Instructional Design
C. Student Assessment
D. Technology
E. Course Evaluation and Management
F. 21st Century Skills
Case Study – San Antonio ISD

SAISD Mission: To graduate all of our students and prepare them for success in higher education

- 54,000 Students
- 88% Hispanic
  9% African American
  3% White
- 88% economic disadvantaged
- Class of 2007 had 26% districtwide dropout rate and 60% graduation rate
SAISD Dropout Recovery Initiative

- Dropout Recovery Pilot
  - $150,000 one year TEA grant
  - Cooper Academy facility equipped for 39 returning dropouts

- Reach Out to Dropouts Walk - Mayor’s Initiative

- Unified support of administration and board
### Top 10 Reasons for SAISD Dropouts

1. No one cares.
2. I was a knucklehead - administrators showed me the door.
3. I got pregnant / got a girl pregnant.
4. I was bored.
5. I needed to work.
6. My mom had cancer and I needed an adjustment to my schedule and was denied so I left.
7. I finished my football eligibility and the school was finished with me.
8. I did not fit in.
9. The teacher didn’t care, so I didn’t care. She showed us she really wasn’t teaching and I wasn’t learning.
10. Other students were picking on me.
SAISD Program Benefits

• True to SAISD Purpose and Mission

• Contributes to the educated citizenry of San Antonio

• Adds ADA for more student curriculum bundles

• Enhances business and community partnerships

• Contributes to the education of future SAISD students
Cooper Academy Highlights

• The city’s only provider of a high school diploma for returning dropouts
• Facility provides safe learning environment
• Rigorous online approach using Penn Foster curriculum
• Available 24/7 with support by certified teachers
• Access to a wide range of career options
• Development of supportive relationships with Cooper Academy students
Cooper Academy Performance Indicators

• How SAISD will measure success
  – Benchmarks met - credit completion, grade level completion, TAKS passers, dual-credit completion
  – Number of dropouts who earn High School Diplomas
  – Number of dropouts who become College Ready

• First semester results
  – 66 credits earned
  – 7 graduates
How to Get Started

- Learn through resource links
- Decide scale (it’s okay to start small)
- Choose an implementation model
- Define clear objectives
- Evaluate virtual schooling partners
- Delineate roles and responsibilities
- Determine measurement and evaluation
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