

# Improving Graduation Rates Through Virtual Schooling

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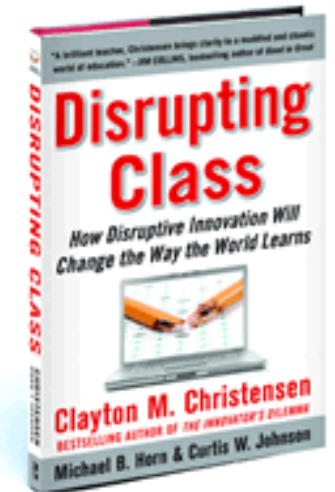


**Solutions**  
*to the Dropout Crisis*

# “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



# Sloan Consortium 2008 Survey

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

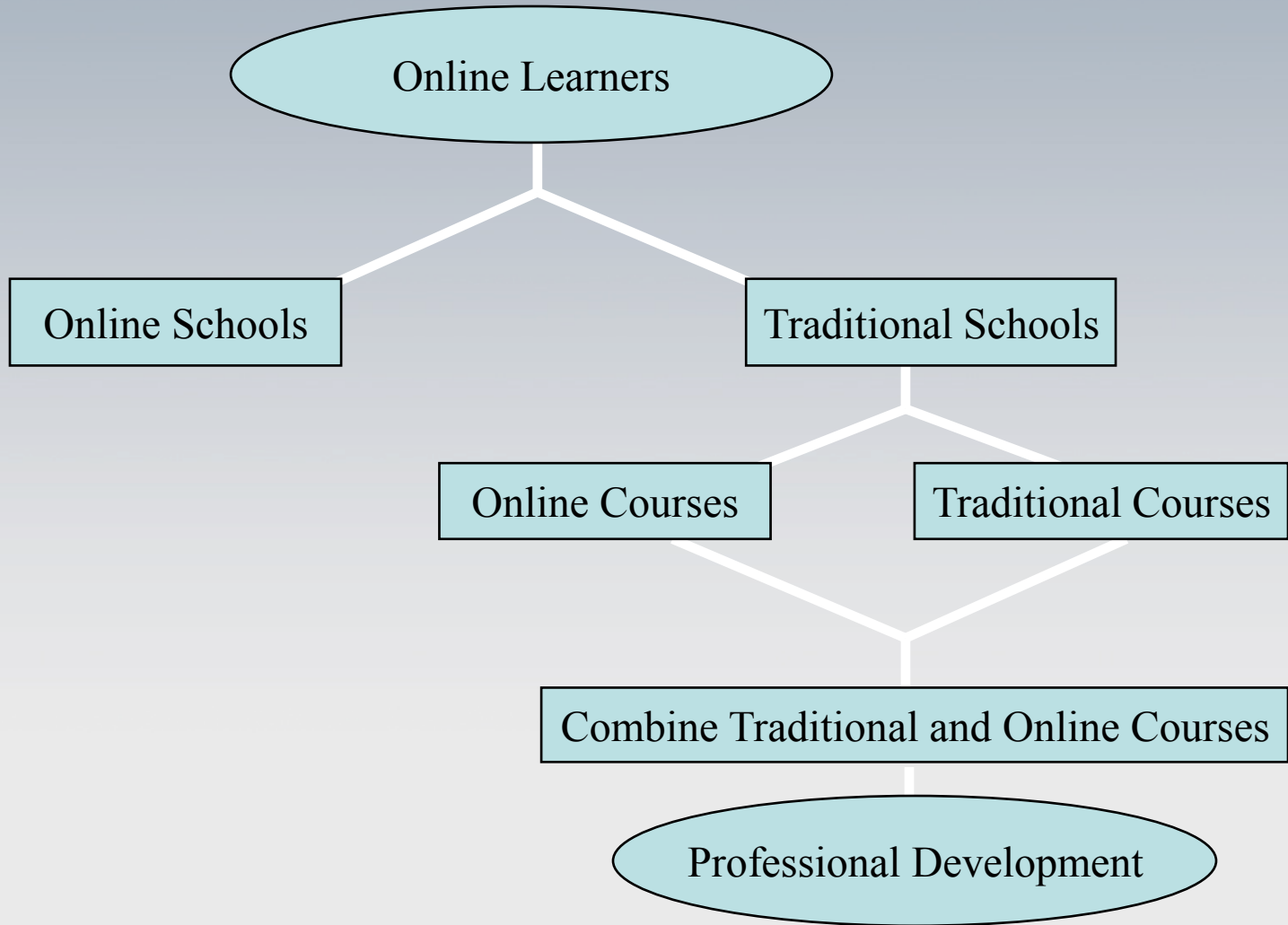


# Types of Virtual Schools

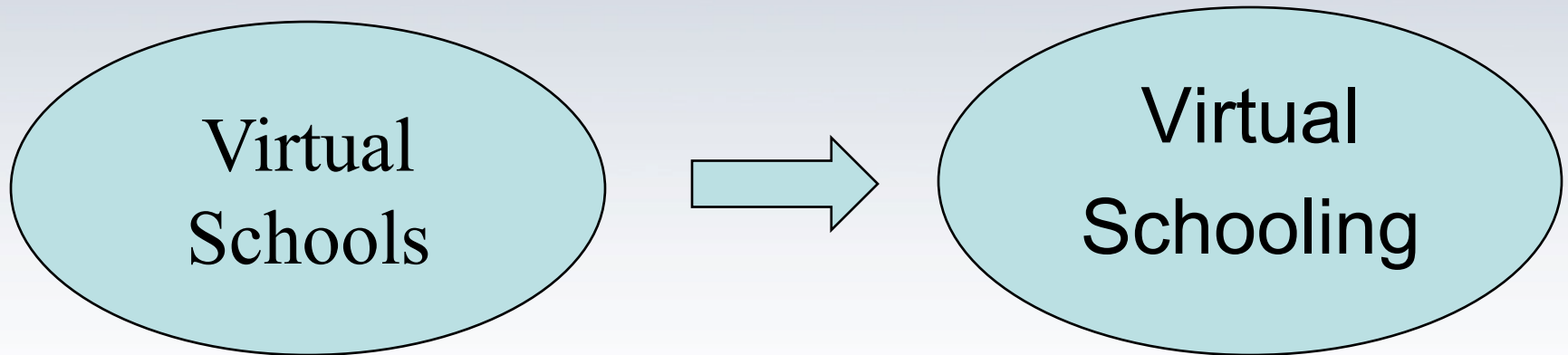
- State-led virtual schools
- Full-time multi-district schools (cyber schools, online charter schools)
- Single-district programs
- Consortia



# Future of Online Learning – Dr. Bill Daggett



# A New Partnership Model



# 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

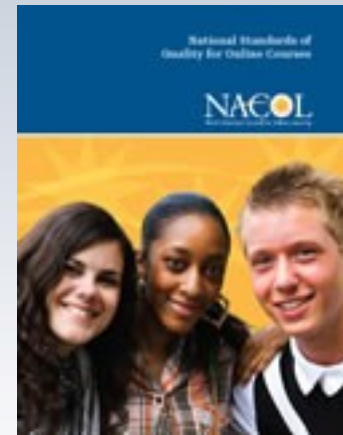
**R**elevance – 21<sup>st</sup> Century and 2.0 skills, CTE offerings

**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. 21<sup>st</sup> 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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