

# New York

## *Executive Summary*

Online Learning Needs Assessment  
June 2010



# Executive Summary

## 1. Online Learning Needs Assessment Overview

### Background

On behalf of the International Association for K-12 Online Learning, we are pleased to provide you this Executive Summary report based on feedback received from your statewide online learning needs assessment survey. Over seven hundred educators and educational leaders from across New York participated in the recent survey. The primary purpose of this survey was to provide a forum for district and school-based staff throughout New York to identify the courses and services that they feel would be most beneficial to their students and staff if offered in an online learning environment.

iNACOL has conducted this type of online survey in eleven states and numerous school districts. The results of this work have helped online programs and education leaders in those districts and states in a number of areas such as:

- Determining what online courses and services they should offer
- Prioritizing their online offerings
- Providing awareness of online learning opportunities to schools and districts across the state
- Demonstrating level of need across the state in an effort to gain support from key stakeholders

This Executive Summary spotlights feedback received from the surveying of district level and school based leaders throughout New York schools.

## Participation

The target audience of the online learning survey was district level leaders and high school based staff throughout public schools in New York State. It was desirable for superintendents, curriculum experts, school leaders and any other educators who work with student course assignment issues and deal with curriculum decisions to provide their feedback in the survey.

A total of 795 individual responses were received as part of this Needs Assessment survey.

The following is a breakdown of the number of completed surveys listed by BOCES and big city school districts:

| <u>BOCES or Big City</u>                 | <u>Respondents</u> | <u>BOCES or Big City</u>                  | <u>Respondents</u> |
|--|--------------------|---|--------------------|
| BROOME DELAWARE TIOGA                    | 55                 | ORLEANS NIAGARA                           | 14                 |
| CAPITAL REGION                           | 21                 | OSWEGO                                    | 0                  |
| CARRARAUGUS-ALLEGANY-ERIE-WYOMING        | 47                 | OTSEGO-DELEWARE-SCHOHARIE-GREENE          | 10                 |
| CAYUGA-ONONDAGA                          | 2                  | PUTNAM NORTHERN WESTCHESTER               | 29                 |
| CLINTON-ESSEX-WARREN-WASHINGTON          | 6                  | QUESTAR III                               | 13                 |
| DELEWARE-CHENANGO-MADISON-OTSEGO         | 15                 | ROCHESTER CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT            | 1                  |
| DUTCHESS                                 | 4                  | ROCKLAND                                  | 16                 |
| EASTERN SUFFOLK                          | 52                 | SAINT LAWRENCE-LEWIS                      | 19                 |
| ERIE 1                                   | 80                 | SOUTHERN WESTCHESTER                      | 55                 |
| ERIE 2 CHAUTAUQUA-CATTARAUGUS            | 31                 | SUFFOLK 2                                 | 5                  |
| FRANKLIN-ESSEX-HAMILTON                  | 8                  | SULLIVAN                                  | 0                  |
| GENESEE VALLEY                           | 13                 | TOMPKINS SENECA TIOGA                     | 1                  |
| GREATER SOUTHERN TIER                    | 35                 | ULSTER                                    | 24                 |
| HAMILTON-FULTON-MONTGOMERY               | 10                 | WASHINGTON-SARATOGA-WARREN-HAMILTON-ESSEX | 15                 |
| HERKIMER-FULTON-HAMILTON-OTSEGO          | 11                 | WAYNE-FINGER LAKES                        | 19                 |
| JEFFERSON-LEWIS-HAMILTON-HERKIMER-ONEIDA | 31                 | BUFFALO CITY S.D.                         | 0                  |
| MADISON ONEIDA                           | 14                 | YONKERS PUBLIC SCHOOLS                    | 2                  |
| MONROE 1                                 | 10                 | THE SYRACUSE CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT         | 0                  |
| MONROE 2-ORLEANS                         | 1                  | OTHER BOCES - Herkimer BOCES              | 1                  |
| NASSAU                                   | 59                 | OTHER BOCES - Mt. Pleasant                | 1                  |
| ONEIDA-HERKIMER-MADISON                  | 14                 | OTHER BOCES - Other BOCES                 | 1                  |
| ONONDAGA CORTLAND MADISON                | 20                 | OTHER BOCES - Western Suffolk             | 1                  |
| ORANGE ULSTER                            | 29                 |   |                    |
|  |                    | <b>TOTAL</b>                              | <b>795</b>         |

## 2. Key Findings

The following is a snapshot of some of the important findings and feedback that were received from the implementation of the Needs Assessment.

### Using Online Learning for School Improvement

Fifty-nine percent (59%) of the respondents stated that online learning options are currently used as a strategy for academic improvement initiatives. Thirty-six percent (36%) of respondents stated that online learning options are a *very* important part of their overall student academic success plan; with another 33% stating that online learning options are *moderately* important.

The four most common reasons given as to how online learning can be used for school improvement initiatives are:

- a) To offer remediation or credit recovery courses
- b) To provide expanded curriculum offerings to students
- c) To address the needs of homebound instruction
- d) Increasing graduation rates

### Current Usage of Online Learning Options

Fifty percent (50%) of the respondents stated that online learning is currently used in their district/schools for credit recovery, test preparation, first-time course credit, content remediation, or test preparation. Online courses for makeup credit / credit recovery were the most commonly identified type of online learning being used.

Of the students currently enrolled in online learning options, the reasons that they enroll are quite diverse. Some of the more commonly identified student populations who are participating in online learning options include:

- a) Students who need content remediation
- b) Students who were unsuccessful in traditional classroom environments
- c) Students who want to want courses not offered at their local school
- d) Students who want to earn college credit (AP®)
- e) Students who have course scheduling conflicts

Twenty-five percent (25%) of respondents stated that their school or district has contracted with a commercial provider to deliver online learning opportunities.

Approval for students to enroll in online courses is most often decided at the school site. Sixty percent (60%) stated that such approval rests with the Principal. Thirty-eight percent (38%) stated that the school counselor is also involved in the approval process.

There appears to be uncertainty as to whether the district or school does or can limit the number of online courses that a student may enroll in. Thirty-five percent (35%) stated that they were “unsure” if such policies exist. Thirty-three percent (33%) stated that policies that limit enrollment do exist.

Thirty-four percent (34%) of the respondents stated that they provide students the opportunity to take their online courses as part of the regular school day; however it is not a requirement. Another 24% stated that taking online courses during the regular school day was a requirement for participating in an online learning option. Twenty-eight percent (28%) stated that time during the regular school day is not provided.

Seventy-four percent (74%) of respondents stated that their school provides on-site support for students enrolled in online courses. Providing an on-site facilitator who is assigned to supervise students who take online courses from their school was the most commonly identified way in which local schools are providing support for online learning.

Forty-one percent (41%) stated that students are afforded the opportunity to take their online course(s) from home. Twenty percent (20%) were “unsure” if students could take their online courses from home. For students who primarily access their online course(s) from home, respondents suggest (80%) that little, if any, support is provided to them. Approximately 5% stated that the school/district equips the student with a computer.

There were a variety of reasons given as to why students have not participated in online learning options. The most common responses were:

- a) State regulations do not address online courses
- b) Students are unaware that online learning options exist
- c) Lack of funding to cover the cost of online learning

### **Level of Need / Interest in Online Learning Options**

The perceived level of need expressed for specific student groups was varied, with no single reason standing out but rather consistent need expressed for all categories. The most common student groups identified as being in need of online learning options are:

- a) Students in need of remediation
- b) Students who are not being successful in a traditional classroom environment
- c) Students receiving homebound instruction
- d) Students who want to enroll in courses not offered at their local school

## **Exam Preparation**

The need for online high-stakes exam preparation was consistent across all categories with online Regents exam preparation receiving the highest number of top votes; followed by SAT® exam preparation.

The need for online End-of-Course test preparation was also identified by a large number of the respondents as a high need. Eighty-seven percent (87%) of respondents stated the online test prep opportunities would benefit students.

## **Advanced Placement**

Numerous AP® courses were identified as being needed for online course delivery. Courses that were most often rated as the highest need included: AP® Biology, AP® Calculus, AP® Chemistry, and AP® U.S. History.

## **World Language**

Mandarin Chinese and Spanish received the highest percentage of votes as being the most needed world language course to have available in an online environment.

## **Mathematics**

Integrated Algebra, AP® Calculus, Technical/Vocational Math, and Algebra 2/Trig were identified as being the most needed math courses for online delivery.

## **Science**

AP® Biology, AP® Chemistry, AP® Physics, Anatomy and Physiology, Living Environment, and Principals of Technology I were identified as being the most needed science courses for online delivery.

## **Language Arts**

Journalism, Creative Writing, and AP® Language and Composition were identified as being the most needed English courses for online delivery.

## **Social Studies**

Economics, U.S. History and Government, and AP® U.S. History were identified as being the most needed social studies courses for online delivery.

## **Technology**

Web Design, Digital Media, and Introduction to Computer Engineering were identified as being the most needed technology courses for online delivery.

## **Other Course Needs**

Additional courses that were commonly identified as being in need for online delivery included health, literacy and writing, GED prep, personal finance, sign language, and parenting skills.

## **Remediation and Credit Recovery**

Algebra I, science courses, and social studies courses were identified as the most needed areas for online remediation and credit recovery.

## **Online Tutoring**

Online tutoring options were received with great interest with tutoring in the subjects of math and science rating the highest.

## **Professional Development**

The type of professional support that will be provided to support online learning was varied. Approximately 45% stated that they would seek to train teachers to serve as online course facilitators. Approximately 33% stated that they would train teacher to develop their own online course.

## **Blended Learning**

Seventy-four percent (74%) of respondents are interested in Blended Learning options. Blended Learning is a term used to describe a model whereby teachers in a traditional classroom can access and incorporate the online content resources provided by a virtual school into their face-to-face environment.

## **Additional Comments from Respondents**

Respondents were asked to provide any additional comments or suggestions that may enable online learning options to better serve the needs of their school / district and students. For a complete list of responses to this question, please review the raw data file that has been provided to you. A sampling of responses includes:

*“If we truly want to prepare students for the world they will live and work in we should consider requiring all students to take at least one online course prior to graduation.”*

*“I have found that adding an online learning component to the classroom increases student engagement.”*

*“I am fearful that this will replace teaching rather than supplementing the instruction that occurs in our classes...”*

*“Online course and blended courses are essential elements for today's learners. This is a very important initiative and I am glad NYS is looking at it closely.”*

### 3. About iNACOL

The **International Association of K-12 Online Learning (iNACOL)** is the leading international K-12 non-profit organization representing the interests of administrators, practitioners, businesses and students involved in online learning. iNACOL's mission is to increase access to educational opportunities and enhance learning by providing collegial expertise and leadership in K-12 online teaching and learning. iNACOL facilitates collaboration, advocacy and research to expand the availability and enhance the quality of K-12 online learning. iNACOL provides support services to new and existing online programs in an effort to promote and assist with accountability and quality implementation of online learning.

iNACOL is an established 501(c)(3) organization with headquarters in the Washington, D.C. area and is governed by a diversified Board of Directors. More information is available online at [www.inacol.org](http://www.inacol.org).

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