



Virtual Advanced Placement (VAP) Program

Oswego County BOCES VAP Program

Program Overview

Educators, students and parents have conflicting thoughts about the implementation of online courses for the completion of critical high school courses. The competition among secondary students to include AP courses on their high school transcripts is intense. Since many public high schools do not have the qualified staff to teach, or the student enrollment to justify the use of school resources to offer the multitude of AP courses currently approved by The College Board, local school boards must make hard decisions about the courses offered by the staff they employ.

Additionally, student access to the Internet is becoming almost pervasive in American schools, making it easier to integrate technology into every day instruction. Accompanying this increase in access has been the creation of virtual schools. Virtual schools, whether regional, state or national in scope, offer alternatives for students in traditional school settings. According to the National Education Technology Plan, nearly 25% of K-12 public schools offers virtual instruction to meet the needs of students (United States Department of Education, Office of Education Technology, 2005).

The Mid-State Region Joint Management Team (JMT) is a collaboration of four (4) BOCES: Cayuga-Onondaga BOCES, Onondaga-Cortland-Madison (OCM) BOCES, Oswego County BOCES, and Tioga-Seneca-Tompkins (TST) BOCES. These four (4) BOCES serve a total of 48 school districts ranging from large suburban districts to small rural districts. The Mid-State Region JMT is applying as a consortium for funding under the Virtual Advanced Placement (AP) Program. Oswego County BOCES will be the lead applicant for the consortium to contribute to NYSED's program towards implementing a virtual learning strategy. Utilizing RTTT funds earmarked for the Virtual Advanced Placement (VAP) Program, the collaborators, including Syracuse University's School of Education, will develop the local capacity to provide virtual learning (online and blended) Advanced Placement coursework to eligible students across eight (8) New York State Counties.

Program Activities

This proposal will target 33 program eligible school districts located throughout the Mid-State Region. These target schools serve 56737 K-12 students with 18,574 of these students enrolled at the high school level.

The envisioned approach for the program includes:

Providing professional development for educators and administrators for the development and delivery of on-demand virtual learning AP® courses including preparatory coursework that enable students to develop the knowledge, skills and predispositions to learn in a virtual environment as aligned with research in the field of virtual and learning and the related integration of technologies in secondary classrooms;

Providing technical assistance to support and further the virtual learning services in the targeted schools resulting in enhanced organizational capacity to support virtual learning;

Developing on-demand virtual learning Advanced Placement® (AP®) courses and exemplar of preparatory units/experiences for students. The consortium will develop coursework for a variety of subjects filling critical gaps identified in a needs analysis conducted by the 4-BOCES project development team, including data provided by College Board;

Delivering on-demand virtual learning AP® courses to students in the targeted schools who would not otherwise have access to such courses for the duration of the grant and rigorously studying the implementation of this work in collaboration with Syracuse University's Office of Professional Development.

Funds from this program will initially create a pilot program for online/blended AP courses in Art History and Statistics. None of the target school districts offer AP Art History and only 5 (4 of which are large suburban districts) districts offer AP Statistics. It was determined that developing two online/blended AP courses, a STEM and Non-Stem subject, would be practical given the wide range of virtual learning environments among all our target schools. Concurrent with the pilot program we would be designing, developing, and implementing an infrastructure for a virtual learning environment for AP courses throughout the Mid-State Region JMT. It is envisioned that this virtual learning environment would be a shared service among the four participating BOCES and its component districts. A virtual AP course would be developed and taught by a teacher from one of the BOCES component districts that would not only be taught to the teacher's own students but to other students throughout the JMT region. Districts that do not have the resources to offer an AP course that may only attract a small number of students could take advantage of this shared service model.

Repository

The collaborative will publish and offer the related AP® courses and exemplary preliminary experiences (to prepare students to learn successfully in a virtual environment) to an Open Educational Resources (OER) statewide virtual learning course repository for use by New York State. Development of virtual learning AP® courses from the program will incorporate the components and reflect the criteria outlined in the NYSED Components for Online and Blended Courses and the NYSED Criteria for Online and Blended Courses. These virtual AP courses will be made available for a statewide virtual learning course repository to be used by New York State teachers.

Professional Development

Thirty-two teachers will go through professional development training to develop and offer online AP courses. An initial 8 teachers (4 from each subject) will receive development training focused on Art History and Statistics for our AP pilot project. Art History teachers will learn to engage students at the same level as an introductory college art history survey, foster critical thinking and an understanding and knowledge of diverse historical and cultural contexts of architecture, sculpture, painting and other media, and engage students to examine and critically analyze major forms of artistic expression from the past and the present from a variety of cultures. Statistics teachers will learn to introduce students to the major

concepts and tools for collecting, analyzing and drawing conclusions from data. Development training will enable teachers to address to students four broad conceptual themes.

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