

Student Support Strategies

A Wisconsin Perspective
in Online and Blended
Learning

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About Wisconsin Digital Learning Collaborative

The Wisconsin Digital Learning Collaborative (WDLC) is a unique statewide partnership with a mission to “provide equitable access to high quality online and blended learning resources throughout Wisconsin.” This partnership results in every student in any school district having access to quality online and blended learning offerings. It also provides digital learning resources for teachers to use in their classrooms. Access to online courses, technology, and resources are available to districts through the WDLC regardless of size, geography, or learning model.

The WDLC consists of three collaborating organizations. The Wisconsin Virtual School (WVS) provides supplemental online courses, as well as services to support the planning and implementing of digital initiatives to a large majority (200+) of the school districts across Wisconsin. The Wisconsin eSchool Network (WEN) is a consortium of 28 partners that provides access to online courses, technology, operational support, digital learning professional development, and other services to its members. Together, WEN and WVS form the foundation of the Collaborative. The third organization, the Department of Public Instruction (DPI), provides quality assurance and helps raise awareness of WDLC. It also provides some fiscal support through the segregated universal service fund administered by the Wisconsin DPI.

In addition to the WDLC representing the digital learning interests of all districts, it also leverages shared knowledge and best practices to reduce costs. It offers a wide variety of resources, services, and benefits that districts need in order to offer online and blended learning options to students.

See the end of this report for a full list of WDLC district and affiliate partners.

About Virtual Learning Leadership Alliance

The WDLC is honored to partner with the Michigan Virtual Learning Research Institute as part of our collaborative partnership of the Virtual Learning Leadership Alliance (VLLA). With a commitment to quality, the VLLA is an association of the chiefs of virtual programs that provides collegial support and collaborative opportunities to the individual members and member organizations to share resources, services, and expertise. This project is one of many collaborative projects related to the VLLA. The WDLC would like to thank the Michigan Virtual Learning Research Institute for our partnership in studying our partner practices across Wisconsin.

About Michigan Virtual Learning Research Institute

In 2012, the Governor and Michigan Legislature passed legislation requiring *Michigan Virtual*[™], formally *Michigan Virtual University*[®], to establish a research center for online learning and innovation. Known as *Michigan Virtual Learning Research Institute*[®] (MVLRI[®]), this center is a natural extension of the work of *Michigan Virtual*. Established in 1998, *Michigan Virtual*'s mission is to advance K-12 digital learning and teaching through research, practice, and partnerships. Toward that end, the core strategies of MVLRI are:

- Research – Expand the K-12 online and blended learning knowledge base through high quality, high impact research;
- Policy – Inform local, state, and national public education policy strategies that reinforce and support online and blended learning opportunities for the K-12 community;
- Innovation – Experiment with new technologies and online learning models to foster expanded learning opportunities for K-12 students; and
- Networks – Develop human and web-based applications and infrastructures for sharing information and implementing K-12 online and blended learning best practices.

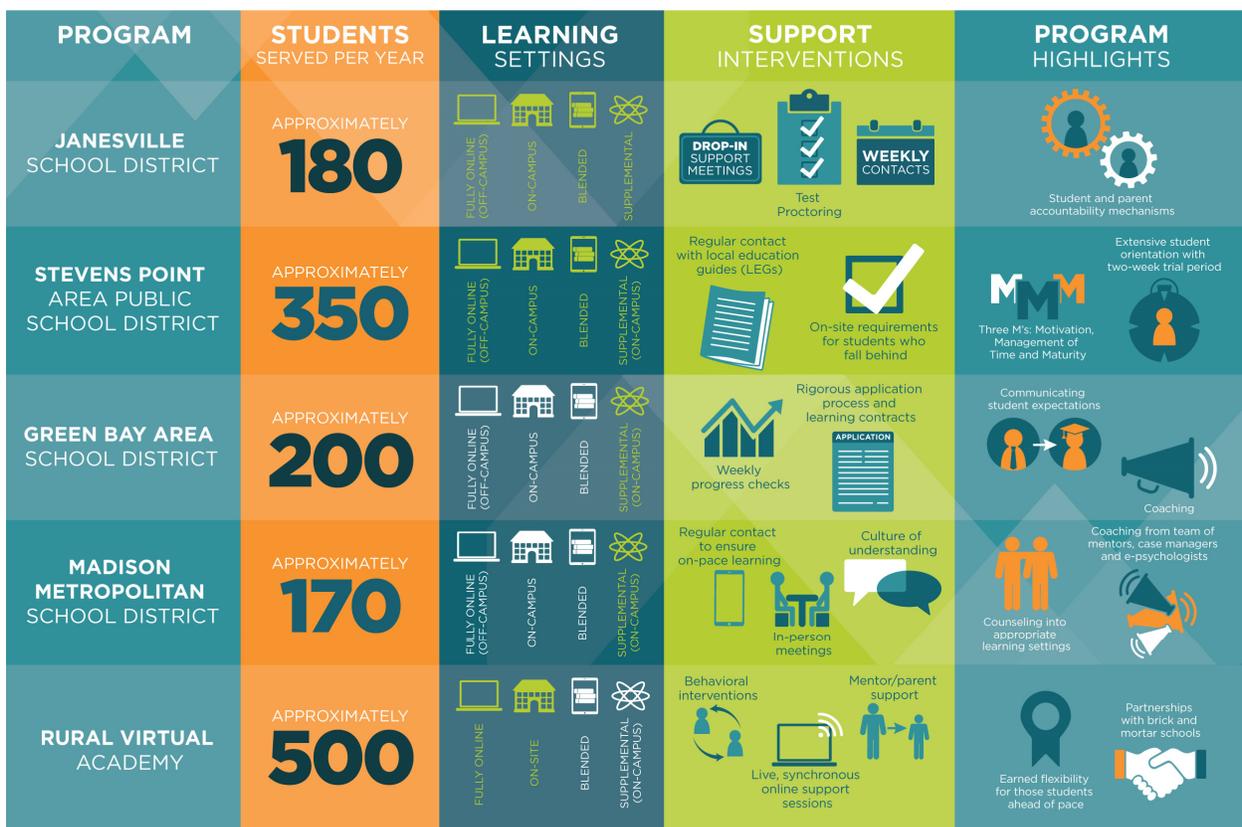
Michigan Virtual dedicates a small number of staff members to MVLRI projects as well as augments its capacity through a fellows program drawing from state and national experts in K-12 online learning from K-12 schooling, higher education, and private industry. These experts work alongside *Michigan Virtual* staff to provide research, evaluation, and development expertise and support.

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Introduction

This report highlights five student support strategies models in Wisconsin’s online and blended learning landscape. Featured programs include Janesville School District, Stevens Point, Green Bay Area School District, Madison Metropolitan School District, and Rural Virtual Academy (Medford School District). Representatives from each of these programs shared insights for this report so that other programs can learn more and understand the advantages and disadvantages of their student supports strategies. John Jacobs, Executive Director of Wisconsin eSchool Network, emphasized, “With the mission of honoring local autonomy, programs have varied objectives, goals, and desired outcomes, all of which impact the student support strategies used across the WDLC partners. Our goal is to help inform partners to see the options before them.” Before going into the program profiles, below is an infographic that provides a visual representation of the content of this report.

STUDENT SUPPORT STRATEGIES



Large version available from <http://www.wisconsineschool.org/media/81279/student-support-infographic.pdf>

ARISE Virtual Academy, Janesville School District *Student Accountability and Teacher Support Model*

ARISE (Achieving Results in Student Education) Virtual Academy serves Janesville students through a variety of programs. For approximately 140 students, it is a full time online school.

For seven students who have been expelled from other schools, it means open enrollment. ARISE also offers supplemental courses to high school students such as AP classes, those that don't fit into students' schedules, and a limited number of make-up or credit recovery classes. Recently, they started offering blended courses, primarily in skills recovery for students that need extra help in reading and math. Any supplemental or service needs students are met within the building.



ARISE staff works seven days a week. They work a seven-hour school day which allows time to work at night and on the weekends if necessary. The open enrollment program for expelled students is open for help on Saturdays by appointment; a parent or guardian must also attend.

Generally, ARISE staff only see the high school students during test taking time, but the students come in when they need to. Elementary students have a required time commitment. They come in for individual meetings with their parent/guardian, and the elementary teacher explains what the students are working on and asks the students about what they learned last week and what they're going to learn in the next week. The parent is given responsibilities, too, so the parent and the teacher work hand-in-hand. Middle school students are required to come in for a two-hour appointment during the first two weeks. After two weeks, reading and math levels have been determined, and students are assigned to an aide; if they need special education services, they're assigned a special ed teacher. They also must meet with the middle school teacher. As with the high school students, they don't have to come in unless they need help or have an exam.

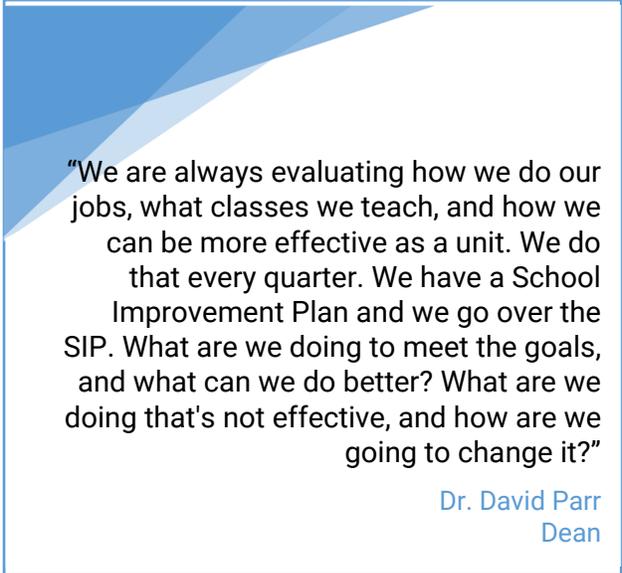
Dr. David Parr has been dean of students for the program since its inception in 2007. Dr. Parr believes it takes a village to care for the students, and he sees that happen every day. "I have full support from every director downtown and the superintendent, so whenever I need resources, I just reach out. I use a lot of resources across the district. Not only do I use the special ed department and the academic learning coaches, I use principals. I have such great relationships. There isn't a single person in the district that isn't trying to get the best for this kid." He also has connections throughout the community that lead to jobs or internships for ARISE students, and parents are engaged as well. "You could never have enough people involved," Dr. Parr states.

Dr. Parr believes the strategies that have the greatest effect on student behavior, motivation, and persistence have to do with personal contact. "Getting to know each student personally and knowing what is going on in their lives is the key to our program," he says. "For instance, I contact my students every week – every single week – even if they're not in trouble. We have files on all our students about what their likes are." Staff creates notes within the operating system, and they maintain a Google file on every student. Every staff member has access to student notes. "When we find out something new, it's added. Everybody just does this as a matter of course. So if they're a sports fan, we know what sports team they follow, and it's in the notes. If they like music, [we know] what kind of music, what kind of band ... If something new comes up for certain bands, I know it and I email my students or text them right away ... and I train my staff how to do that."

Students are expected to be fully accountable, and they get support from ARISE staff in learning how. When they start to fail a class, students must make an appointment with the teacher in the subject they need. Parr explains, "It is a mandatory meeting. If they miss the meeting, we call them to reschedule until we sit down with them one-on-one and figure out what the problem is and why. Those meetings continue once a week until the grade is acceptable." The teacher, the student, and the parents/guardians then create a contract that identifies the goals for the student so everyone knows what is expected going forward.

The skills recovery program for middle school students also promotes student accountability. "We have an aide for our intensive reading program who sits down with students weekly." Staff keeps track of attendance and whether parents/guardians are called when students are absent the first time. When students miss two appointments in a row, Dr. Parr makes the call. He makes it clear that the aides need to have a personal investment in the students. He says, "I tell them, 'You got to know these 15 students like they're your own children.'"

Dr. Parr supports the teachers and mentors by working collaboratively, offering guidance, building community, and taking on the most challenging situations. "I make daily phone calls and text daily. I take all parents that are difficult," Dr. Parr explains. He also works with all the expelled students. "If we have parents that are abusive, which we do, they are on my list immediately. They come off of [the teachers' list] and go onto mine the first time they're abusive until I get the parent to settle down, which usually means they're mine for the rest of [the students'] careers here. If they apologize to the mentor, then they get to go back to that. I don't



"We are always evaluating how we do our jobs, what classes we teach, and how we can be more effective as a unit. We do that every quarter. We have a School Improvement Plan and we go over the SIP. What are we doing to meet the goals, and what can we do better? What are we doing that's not effective, and how are we going to change it?"

Dr. David Parr
Dean

let my teachers deal with difficult students, difficult situations. It immediately becomes a problem that I take on.”

Teachers in ARISE can cover many courses; but if they don't have a teacher in a particular area where the student is struggling, Dr. Parr calls on teachers in other Janesville schools — literally. “I don't have a licensed physics teacher, so the high schools help us with that. I will go to the high school with the student so they can meet one-on-one. The staff is very good about giving us help if we don't have it here.” ARISE teachers' reach extends to monitoring courses, too. When they see a number of students getting low grades or failing a class, they review it together to identify whether it is the class or the way the class is taught. “We are always evaluating how we do our jobs, what classes we teach, and how we can be more effective as a unit. We do that every quarter. We have a School Improvement Plan and we go over the SIP. What are we doing to meet the goals, and what can we do better? What are we doing that's not effective, and how are we going to change it?”

ARISE staff find solutions as a group. They meet every Friday, and Dr. Parr presents a tip of the week that they talk about, along with a brief summary of an article. These are also the times when the staff discusses student issues and problem solves as a team. “If something is going on in the kid's life, we want to know about it,” Dr. Parr declares. “Every Friday, we talk about every student that has a concern. Right now, we have 140 full-time kids. There's probably 20 students that we talk about every Friday until that situation is resolved. We talk about the kid, what is the problem, and then somebody's assigned to helping that student solve that problem, and they will follow up until that situation is resolved.”

The demands on teachers can lead to a lot of stress. Dr. Parr is concerned about burnout, so he injects some fun in the routine. “We're doing so much all the time that there are certain times of the year that I'm easier on my staff. The first two weeks of the school year, we're all putting in a ton of time, so I buy a pizza.” He also plans after school gatherings to decompress. “One of my parents owns a food truck, so we're having Mexican food this Friday.” With the number of students who come in for final exams, the stress is palpable. “I'll put out a veggie tray, I'll have balloons around the room, I'll dress in a goofy tie. We have a holiday movie when this all wraps up, and it's a pajama party. All the kids come in that want to and have a movie and popcorn. I have pizzas delivered from Happy Joe's, stuff like that. We try and lighten the mood because it does become very stressful for staff.”

Although part-time teachers are rarely in the building, Dr. Parr makes sure they're included. “I see them one-on-one for a brief time period every week, but they don't come to staff meetings. ... I have to get that sense of community out to them, so when they come in, everybody says hello to them. Everybody. We make it a point to talk to them, get to know them as a person just like we get to know all of our kids as people.”

Online Learning Center, Stevens Point Area Public School District *Student Orientation, Expectations, and Interventions*



Stevens Point Area Public School District runs an online learning center (OLC) that staff refer to as a non-charter virtual school model. The program was conceptualized in the fall of 2010 and arose from a need to offer students some alternatives when budget challenges resulted in a reduction of the face-to-face course options offered. When launching the program, district administrators recognized a need to have one staff member, a core

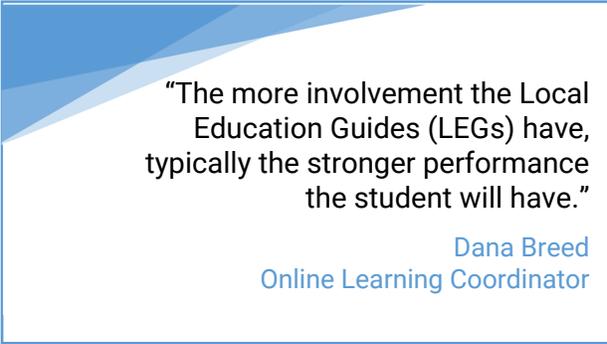
academic teacher, lead the initiative. Dana Breed was selected and remains the Online Learning Coordinator for the district. Breed developed the initial policies and procedures for the program by working with various technology committees and other administrators within the district. In spring of 2011, the program was officially launched with 31 students, all in grades 10 through 12, each enrolled in an individual online course. The program has continually grown, semester by semester, and now serves over 1,850 students over 2,550 course enrollments. The program classifies students in three separate ways: “on-campus” learners who take just one online course to supplement their four-year course plan, “off-campus” learners who receive all of their instruction and coursework off-site in the home environment, and “combo” learners who are taking a combination of both online and face-to-face courses.

A focal point of the Stevens Point program is its orientation process. Students who are interested in enrolling through the OLC must first fill out an application to indicate interest and provide a rationale for enrollment. The coordinator reviews the application and then, if necessary, contacts individual parties to ask questions, including counselors, IEP case managers, or past teachers, to ensure a good fit. If a student is determined not to be a good fit for the program, they may be encouraged to apply again in another semester or year. Students who are accepted receive a contract and a date for orientation, which is a two-part process. The first involves a face-to-face orientation with the coordinator to review a checklist of expectations and preparatory items. The checklist covers things like communication processes with support staff and instructors, basic course navigation, and other services available through the OLC. This face-to-face meeting lasts approximately 45 minutes. The second stage is an online orientation class that requires about one hour to complete, including different assignments allowing students to demonstrate their understanding of the system’s navigation and program expectations. An orientation teacher grades assignments for appropriateness and understanding, then moves the student to a two-week trial period. During the trial period, the student is required to attend five working sessions in the OLC, typically working with the coordinator, in five different class periods at a time of the student’s choosing. During the two-week timeframe, the student is expected to wrap up any items still required in the online orientation course and begin work on the actual course in which they are enrolled. During the

trial period, the coordinator serves as the first line of support for students, providing help with assignment clarification, facilitating communication with online teachers, submitting work, and sometimes with content questions.

For the duration of the course, students are assigned a local education guide, often referred to as a coach or a LEG. This person oversees the progress of the students to whom they are assigned and intervenes when necessary, providing support to ensure students stay on pace and are completing assignments as expected. The program heavily promotes the concept of the “three Ms”: motivation, management of time, and maturity. The LEGS help reinforce behavior in online students that demonstrate the “three Ms”. There are two LEGs at the high school who work closely with the coordinator of the center, as well as one LEG at each of the two junior high schools in the district, serving students in grades 7 through 9. If students have questions or concerns, they are encouraged to seek face-to-face support from their LEG at the OLC. If needed, a Google Hangout or phone meeting may be scheduled as well. LEGS may also have conversations with parents/guardians about concerns and suggestions for improvement, where necessary. Some LEGs even have weekly meetings scheduled with parents/guardians. Breed states that “the more involvement the LEGs have, typically the stronger performance the student will have.”

Students that have participated in online learning through the center in previous semesters are referred to as “veteran students” and must also complete a different checklist before enrollment that covers basic contact information, LEG assignment, and communication practices. Veterans of online learning and new students alike are required to maintain appropriate pacing in the course and be on-site for five working sessions during the first two weeks of the course. If students fall behind, they are required to come back on-site for more working sessions. The support strategy varies from student to student and could require additional on-site working arrangements, independent study halls with the coordinator, or attending the tutor lab that is available any class period of the day. Students that have an intervention have their own unique game plan to get back on track based on their needs.



“The more involvement the Local Education Guides (LEGs) have, typically the stronger performance the student will have.”

Dana Breed
Online Learning Coordinator

Breed notes that they have had difficulty with online courses being taken for credit recovery and indicates that the program does not have the staff available to dedicate full-time support for each student to make credit recovery enrollments successful. Breed indicates a desire to have a full-time aide to assist credit recovery students, holding them more accountable for their learning by being physically present with them at any time during the school day in a dedicated learning space.

Overall, one of the most important strategies the program has developed is helping students understand their goals for enrolling in an online course. Greater understanding of student goals and intentions help staff provide much needed motivation along the way. As Breed notes, treating students like individuals with unique needs and involving multiple staff members along the way –including counselors, teachers, and support staff– makes students feel that they are cared for and that many people are invested in their success.

Online Program, Green Bay Area Public School District *Coaching and Student Expectations*

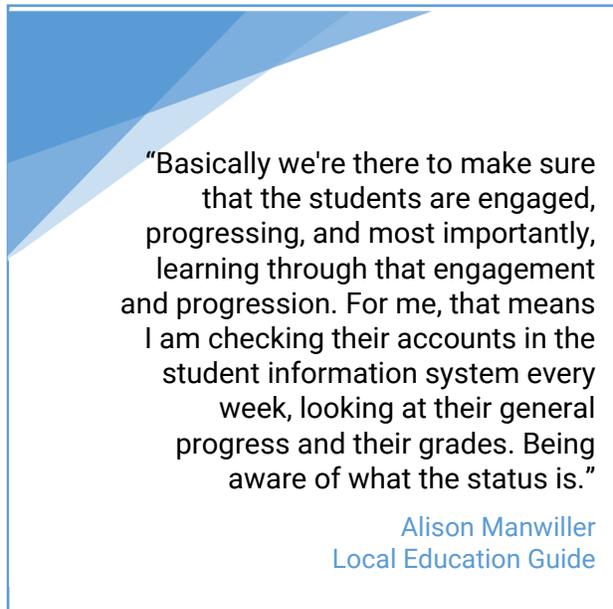
The Green Bay Area Public School District Online Program has been in place since 2007. Although the supplemental online program currently serves an average of 200 students per year in grades 6 through 12, enrollment is higher among high school students with middle school enrollment, averaging two or three students every year. Alison Manwiller is the local education guide, or LEG, who supports students enrolled in virtual courses. She is housed in the district office but mentors all students taking online courses one-on-one by visiting them at the Green Bay school where they take their face-to-face courses. Typically, she works with 70 students during fall and spring semesters. In the summer, teachers take on the role of mentor. Manwiller then takes on a different mentor role: coaching the teachers in how to mentor the students. In the summer, Manwiller and the teachers form a collaborative learning team. Because the teachers are usually not familiar with mentoring, Manwiller monitors how they're interacting with students and provides back up. She says, "We meet before summer school begins and again when summer is over. We talk about what's going well, what we need to fix, what we want to do differently."



When Green Bay students request enrollment in online courses, they fill out an application identifying why they want to take the course. Their application must be approved by the consultation team in their building which is typically made up of school counselors, a social worker, psychologist, and an associate principal. The students and their parents/guardians must also sign an agreement that stipulates, for example, student expectations for academic integrity, engagement, progress, and communication.¹ Before the course begins, Manwiller recommends a conversation with the school counselor and student about the expectations for online course behavior, participation, and pacing. Manwiller created a document for the consultation team describing the characteristics of students who are likely to be successful learning online.² “Let’s not set them up for something they’re not prepared to do. They really, really need to be self-starters because you have to turn on your computer, log on, read by yourself, create assignments, post them, look for feedback, make revisions. Not every student is ready to do all that.”

The LEG (sometimes called a coach or a mentor) is responsible for the initial setup with the student, seeing them through the self-enrollment process and the required orientation. All students interested in enrolling in an online course must successfully complete the orientation course that the Wisconsin eSchool Network developed. Manwiller has added some elements to the orientation course to meet requirements she believes students should be familiar with before they get started with their courses, such as how to create a Google folder, how to upload a file, how to remove a file, or how to communicate effectively in the online environment. She also establishes her expectations for academic behavior. “I want students to know from the very beginning what academic integrity means and examples of what it looks like and what it doesn’t, and I want them to acknowledge back to me that they understand. No plagiarizing. No falsification. No using other student’s work as my own. No collaboration without permission.”

Effective coaching begins when the student starts the enrollment process and continues until the student completes the course. “Basically we’re there to make sure that the students are engaged, progressing, and most importantly, learning through that engagement and progression. For me, that means I am checking their accounts in the student information



¹ See Appendix for agreement.

² See Appendix for document.

system every week, looking at their general progress and their grades. Being aware of what the status is." Manwiller identifies where there are challenges as evidenced by low grades or being significantly behind pace (more than a week or three assignments). She also looks for

1. When did they last log into the course?
2. When did they post their last assignment?
3. Are there assignments posted that they need to revise?
4. Are there assignments for which they received very low scores?

In addition to weekly check-ins, Manwiller communicates directly with the students either in person or via phone or email. "We give kids feedback on their work not unlike feedback that they get on assignments. It should be timely. It should be accurate, clear, and meaningful." When there's an issue, she contacts parents and guardians. If there's a pattern that suggests, for example, a reluctance on the student's part to re-engage, Manwiller meets with the student face-to-face, asking "What's happening? What do we need to fix? What are your challenges? What's your plan moving forward?"

Students are given two weeks to start the course, 10 days in the summer. Manwiller sends a welcome email, introducing students to their content teacher and identifying herself as the mentor. The email includes clear expectations that the student will start their course in two weeks, familiarizing themselves with the course content and set up and verifying that it is a good fit for them. She also includes the caution that they will be removed from their course if they are not on pace during the drop window. A week later, she sends another email to those who are not showing any activity. If students aren't in the course by day 14, they are dropped and receive a communication to that effect. Manwiller explains, "My closing line is always, 'If you still want to take this course, please reply. We'll get together and we'll talk about it.' And then I go out and I have that conversation face-to-face about what engagement really means, and what those expectations are, and that they're serious, they matter because we know that kids who engage early are more likely to learn and be successful. And again, we don't want kids to get into these courses and say, 'What the heck am I doing here?' because the grade is going on their transcript regardless of whether they get a 98% or a 28%."

"I'm a stickler and I'm mean and I'm tough," Manwiller acknowledges, "But I also let some students just drive in their own direction. That's why those face-to-face meetings are really important because you think you have a handle on what's happening in a kid's head until you meet with them and then you realize, 'Oh, there is more to this kid than maybe I thought there was.' Having that connection to students is every bit as important as it is in the classroom. I wish I had more time to get to know them."

Manwiller believes one of the strategies that has the greatest effect on student behavior, motivation, and persistence is "those face-to-face connections, where they look at you as a human being, not some entity that is sending out this edict." She also stresses the importance of framing communication in a positive way. She sends email to celebrate their success and copies parents/guardians so they know the students are doing a great job. "That lets the

student know that your primary interest is them, not the course completion, although course completion is going to be an important thing for them; but ‘the important thing to me, as your mentor, is you and what’s happening with you.’”

Manwiller summarizes the primary elements that lay the foundation for student success. “Make sure your students are well prepared to go out into the network through that orientation process. Make sure they understand what expectations we have for them and give them the kind of personalized communication that will grab their attention and get them to recognize what’s going on and then connect with you. You can’t underestimate the benefit of creating authentic relationships with students.” Manwiller states, “Good communication—well thought out, clear communication—is essential.”

Online Learning, Madison Metropolitan School District *Coaching and Interventions*



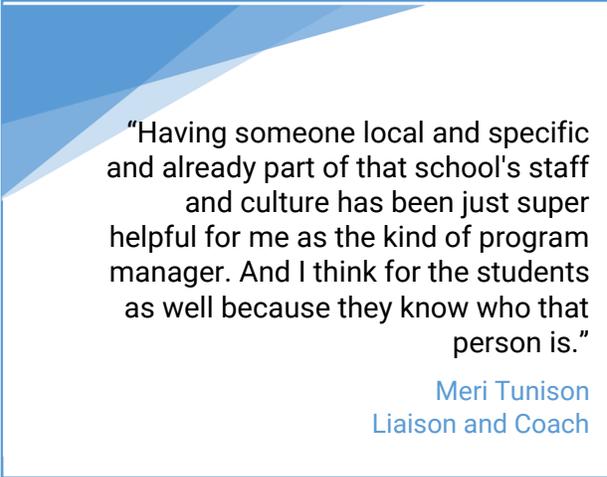
Online Learning MADISON METROPOLITAN SCHOOL DISTRICT

Madison Virtual Campus (MVC) is a supplemental online program serving Madison high school students with one or two classes that they otherwise would not be able to take face-to-face. About 150 enrollments each year come from four comprehensive high schools, as well as alternative

schools in the Madison district, with 60 to 70 students each semester and 50 in the summer. Some middle school students who need access to advanced coursework are also enrolled in MVC.

MVC provides several levels of support for students during the request process, the approval process, orientation, and while they’re in the course. MVC has a mentor teacher (also called a coach) at each of Madison’s four comprehensive high schools and is a specific staff member who has been given time to act as the coach or mentor, registrar, mentor teacher, and orientation teacher at that school. The mentors are integral in working with counselors, case managers, school psychologists, and principals in thinking through the options for the students: face-to-face, blended credit recovery, or online. Meri Tunison, Wisconsin eSchool Network District Liaison and coach for the alternative and middle school students says, “We really count on those school coaches and counselors ... because they know the kids.”

The final decision about what students were enrolled in online courses used to be centralized. Tunison explains that they worked hard to build understanding and capacity for the mentor at the school and the counselors and case managers so they would be able to have those conversations. “Right away they’re thinking, ‘Well, what’s the best way to support the student in terms of course choice from the get-go?’ so that they are making the best recommendation for the kids. We use our Compelling Needs Document to help guide counselors and the mentor teachers in deciding whether a student maybe has a particular need for the course.”³ MVC has a limited number of seats available each semester. While trying to serve as many kids as possible but also keeping in mind what’s a good fit and the other options available for that student at the school, the document helps them decide.



“Having someone local and specific and already part of that school’s staff and culture has been just super helpful for me as the kind of program manager. And I think for the students as well because they know who that person is.”

Meri Tunison
Liaison and Coach

Orientation is a requirement for all of the students who want to enroll through eSchool network partners. In Madison, the mentor teacher is also the orientation teacher, so they come to know the student from the perspective of what skills they have going into the online class, what they are going to need to work on, and how they handle this new type of learning in kind of a low risk situation. The mentor teacher registers the student, too, and is responsible for getting to know the student, communicating with the families, and making sure orientation expectations are clear. During the online course, the mentors also coach students in being successful online learners and meeting program expectations.

Once the students are in the online course, they have an additional level of support: their content teacher. Tunison encourages the mentor teachers to also make use of the other members of a student’s support team, such as counselors, case managers, and school psychologists. “We make sure that our mentors feel comfortable communicating with the different stakeholders as needed. That way they can support kids from a variety of different levels.”

Mentors are not necessarily content specialists in the online courses their students are taking, so content knowledge is not an expectation of mentors. The mentors focus on coaching that provides student support for being successful in the online class. “We don’t do content support; it’s the content teacher who can really bring that level of expertise. But we do work with kids. If they have been lagging behind in pace, we work on strategies for them to get back on pace. We have very clear email templates that we use within our system. It pulls in the right information

³ See Appendix for document.

when you need it, and you're not spending time trying to craft the perfect email."⁴ She explains their consistency with the emails that go out to students regularly. "It should be a consistent approach to the communication and then with a little personalized touch to make sure that you're really showing 'Okay, I'm looking at your stuff now, here's what I want you to do' versus just a generic email every week."

The mentor teacher is really intended to be that local advocate, coach, and support for the student, as well as the person who makes sure the student isn't straying too far from program expectations. "It's a pivotal role for that piece of student support. Students really know that this is the support person who I can talk to. 'If I'm having problems with my online course or online teacher, they can be my first person to run that by. If I need to talk about other options, they can help connect me and make sure they're looking at options with my counselor,'" Tunison explains.

Face-to-face time is important for some aspects of coaching. "I actually envy this for my comprehensive school coaches because they're physically at the schools that their students are at and so, for example, I usually see and encourage them to set aside time when they're able to really meet with the students at their school, especially at the beginning of the semester but any time." Tunison works out of the central office but supports alternative students as well as middle school students who can be located in as many as eight schools. "I try and get out and start them in orientation in person. After that, if there is a small group at a school, then I might stop by once a month or something like that. Middle school and alternative school kids have a little bit more local support for monitoring what they are doing during the school day compared to our high school kids. I might communicate with [the local support] and say, 'How's it going? Do you need me to come by? Do you see any issues? Does it seem like the kids are working on their stuff?'"

When it comes to introducing the new coaches to their role and building a community of support, they receive personalized attention just as the students do. Tunison sits down with the mentor for a couple of hours and goes through the general processes, what working with a student from start to finish looks like, various resources, and communications with counselors. Throughout the school year, she meets with the mentors at a standing, 20-minute lunch meeting every Tuesday. Instead of using the time for weekly reminders, Tunison shares tips and describes resources, for example, sharing what they can do using a particular role in their system and where they can go to see student activity for particular areas, and then allows time for questions and discussion. "It's a nice, quick check-in for them. Then we try and have at least one meeting face-to-face. That's another opportunity to have more of those deeper discussions as well as, maybe, some training on some new tools," Tunison says.

Another factor contributing to the effectiveness of a coach is their connection to the community. "Having someone local and specific and already part of that school's staff and

⁴ See Appendix for templates.

culture has been just super helpful for me as the kind of program manager. And I think for the students as well because they know who that person is.” Other school staff– counselors for example – also know the coach which can be helpful. “We found an advantage with staff at those schools who have been very willing to work on a co-support system where they don't need to worry about the details of our online system unless they really want to, but they help me with just checking with the students.”

Tunison describes the foundation of their approach to communicating with and supporting the students, including when issues arise. “Our interventionist strategies are twofold. One is that we have the consistent language and just general understanding of, ‘Okay. What happens if X occurs?’ If something is not working for the student, whether it's their pace or if there's a plagiarism issue or if external factors are impacting the student's ability to succeed in the class. We invite counselors, case managers, and other staff to really be on the lookout, be included on the progress reports and know updates about how a student is doing. If there's anything not course related that comes up that we want to make them aware of, or intervene on, or support, that communication line is really well established.”

Tunison sees clarity, consistency, and understanding as keystones to success with student behavior, motivation, and persistence. “It's being upfront with what the expectation is that they're not meeting but then not just leaving it at that. Follow up with, ‘Let's talk on the phone about strategies,’ or ‘Email me back with what questions you have or what you need from me to help you meet this expectation in the next week or so’ or something like that.” Her position is that warnings alone can result in a student checking out entirely. “The best way to approach it is a kind of scaffolding so that they get there, because then you're helping the student learn more of that ownership and self-advocacy. That has definitely had a good impact on student relationships with their coaches and their willingness to adjust as they go and learn from whatever mistakes they may have made or misinformation they've gotten that lead to that expectation not being met.”

Finally, Tunison has this advice for coaches and others on the online learner support team: “Be consistent but also be understanding. We've worked really hard to be as consistent as possible with communications, with holding kids to our expectations for the program, following through with our consequences. But the other side of it is to also be understanding when a student has been tackling something externally that is just beyond their control or they're having trouble processing. Making sure we've got case managers, counselors, people like that included in this process, that's really helpful because then you already have those relationships established a little bit so that you can help work with them to figure out, ‘Well, okay. What can we do going forward for this student?’”

Rural Virtual Academy, Multi-District Charter School Consortium Earned Release Concept

The Rural Virtual Academy (RVA) is a preK-12 virtual charter school serving children from throughout the state of Wisconsin. They operate in consortia with 20 school districts and provide learning options from completely offline to completely online. In grades 7-12, they offer live, daily, direct instruction to their students. They also operate a second arm of their school where they provide the content and professional development to brick and mortar teachers in their consortium to develop and expand flexible blended learning solutions for all students.



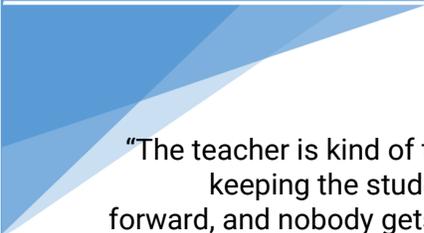
Every Child is at the Center of Their Own Education

The virtual school operates very much like a traditional school system in that student supports look fairly traditional in terms of having a special education department, guidance counseling services, administrative support, and educational teacher and aid support, as well. In that regard, it doesn't vary much from what would parallel those types of services in a traditional school setting. The counselors deal with counseling issues, scheduling, and ensuring credits are being made. Special education staff works with special education students, and pupil support staff and administrative staff work with student councils, clubs, and groups. For academic supports, RVA has intervention periods and response-to-intervention programs prior to special education referrals. There are behavioral supports in place, too, even in the virtual world. Any support service that would be found within a traditional school environment, RVA is able to provide virtually in some capacity. The services are provided to the grades 7-12 students in Blackboard Collaborate as direct, live service.

For the elementary school, services look different. In pre-K through grade 6, the parent/guardian is the mentor, working along with their child or children at home with teacher support. About 60% of their elementary families use off-line, book-driven curriculum options to provide education at home. The teachers meet one-on-one with the kids at the elementary school. There

are also some opportunities for group or classroom activities; but those are monthly or bi-weekly, and the sessions are not mandatory for the elementary students. Parent-teacher conferences are scheduled a minimum of three times per year when the teacher and parent look closely at the basic end of year expectations for elementary students' skill sets. In these conferences, the teacher and parents/guardians get together and look at a rubric to assess where the student is and develop a path for getting the student where he/she needs to be by the end of the year. The conference provides the teacher an opportunity to provide additional supports to the parent/guardian if needed. RVA gives students adaptive assessments along the way, too, but at the elementary level when RVA is talking about academically measuring progress, the program gives postage paid envelopes and Google Drive accounts to the students and their parents/guardians. Thus, the teachers are accessing student progress by seeing the work that's being submitted electronically as the students go through their lessons.

As the students get older, the parents/guardians relinquish some of the education that's typically taking place at home to teachers. In the upper grades, more than one teacher is involved and guidance counselors enter the picture to help students understand what it means to earn credits. Beginning in sixth grade, the program starts to offer some online courses taught by teachers. The first courses are physical education and health education, as well as math and reading. Parents/guardians have the option of enrolling their children in live, daily, direct instruction courses, or can continue to work independently with their children at home. Once the students get to high school, that curriculum is completely online, and 90% or more are in live, daily, direct instruction classes. The students may take some elective courses independently, as RVA has a library of elective course options, but the core subjects are taught through live, daily, direct instruction. In high school, three-week grade reports are sent to the parent/guardians so that they have a clear view of where their child is in terms of pace, progress, and grades in their courses. All students are required to attend their classes for the first three weeks of each semester. Once the three-week grade report comes out, then the parent/guardian and teachers can determine if the students have to be at class, especially if they are working ahead and excelling at the course. Other students who are falling behind are required to go to daily instruction.



“The teacher is kind of the bulldozer keeping the students pushing forward, and nobody gets left behind. We don't want kids to fall off and become credit deficient or fail. At the same time, we really want to be able to incentivize for the kids who are working ahead that don't necessarily have to come to class every day.”

Charlie Heckel
Principal

If students are seen to be excelling, they can earn what RVA calls “earned flexibility.” This option is applied when a student has demonstrated the ability to work independently in the courses, they're moving ahead, and they're proficient in their scores. At that point, the teachers let the

students know after that first three weeks that they've earned flexibility. The student then has the option to come to class every day if they still want to, but they don't have to since they're ahead of pace. The teachers teach at daily minimum pace, a pace that will get students to the place where they need to be in order to earn credit by the end of the course. As Charlie Heckel, the Principal of RVA says, "The teacher is kind of the bulldozer keeping the students pushing forward, and nobody gets left behind. We don't want kids to fall off and become credit deficient or fail. At the same time, we really want to be able to incentivize for the kids who are working ahead that don't necessarily have to come to class every day." This helps RVA mitigate some of the initial concerns and research they saw about full-time online learning focused on students not being able to keep pace and work independently. Roughly 75% of students who earn flexibility do not take advantage of it; the students still choose to come to class every day. Heckel believes this is because of the student-to-student interaction that happens in the live instruction sessions. RVA stands for Relationships, Values, and Academics. The teachers first responsibility is to build and establish relationships with the families and the students. They also emphasize the values of hard work and perseverance, so once those two pillars are in place, the academics tend to follow. RVA has recently implemented "Mandatory Monday," even for the students who have earned flexibility because it's a good way to check in with the students and let them know what is happening that week in class just in case there's an additional teacher-infused activity the students would be interested in.

In addition to the academics, RVA offers online clubs and events. They've split the state into eight regions where they host regional events via their coordinators in that region. These events include field trips and activities where families are invited to bring their students to interact. These events happen frequently, with at least online club or event and/or physical field trip activity going on every week. The clubs include Cooking Club competitions and Lego Club, and the teachers are the ones primarily coordinating and facilitating all of those experiences. From 11:00am to 11:45am every day students can take part in their club-based activities during an activity period, offering a consistent block of time that provides a value-add for the students. These activities can include student council, yearbook, and newspaper club.

One of the biggest challenges for RVA is keeping up with demand for students who want to be part of the program. Last year, RVA grew by 50%. Trying to forecast, develop, and provide mentoring and professional development for the instructors and a quality educational experience is a huge undertaking administratively. Another challenge is scheduling; since RVA is a consortium model, the program shares a staff across 20 different school districts. There is a wait time to find out whether or not shared staff is available for the work that needs to be done and a three-week period in August when scheduling happens because RVA doesn't know exactly when classes will happen and what teachers are going to teach.

While there are challenges, there are also opportunities. The district-based program allows students to choose if they want to take the courses in-building. In Wisconsin, with the Course Options tool, families can elect to take up to two courses at any institute of higher education or a different school district or building that they choose, so this path allows some flexibility and

choice for students. About the success of the RVA program, Heckel said, “We’re going to build support structures to increase these kinds of partnerships and opportunities. The majority of the population with whom we work are not independent learners. So if we created a program that catered to independent learners, as a majority of online programs do, research shows that these programs don’t fare well in the field. Just as we have learned, we have to build the supportive infrastructure necessary for constantly supporting students to catch up or to intervene. Programs can bridge the gap between traditional learning and virtual learning by implementing best practices, namely a high touch approach. Teachers in high contact, low student-to-teacher ratio is a recipe for success. To others interested in doing this, don’t try to reinvent the wheel. Look for models of best practice, and just realize the amount of energy it’s going to take to do it well. I think academic outcomes are a direct result of establishing good relationships with kids, same as in the classroom. Kids will work hard for you if they trust you and feel like you’re in their corner. They know that they can reach out to you. Academic outcomes are just simply a by-product of those things. I think, sometimes, people go into this wanting academic outcomes to be their initial focus, and they forget about the other stuff. I just see it in reverse. Establishing good connections with kids is really the baseline for them to, in the end, have a positive academic outcome.”

Resources and Contact Information

The five programs featured here have a different way of approaching their student support strategies. From these models, the field can learn the variety of strategies programs use to understand what works best for providing students support in online and blended learning. The following resources were suggested by the program representatives as helpful in their shift to and maintenance of these strategies.

They have also opened communications for anyone who is interested in learning more:

Janesville School District

David Parr, Dean of Students
dparr@janesville.k12.wi.us

Stevens Point

Dana Breed, Online Learning Coordinator
dbreed@pointschools.net

Additional Resources

- Student Contract⁵
- District OLC⁶

⁵ https://docs.google.com/document/d/1tf3cxL36vBvpcP-h0M67x33pHvzQQBx1oJm_NSje9bc/edit

⁶ https://docs.google.com/document/d/1xStNBfmJt2dTfS5bm_PvyKdomUagwPCKsuCWeF70Tdg/edit

Green Bay Area School District

Alison Manwiller, Program Support Teacher and Local Education Guide Online Learning
agmanwiller@gbaps.org

Additional Resource

- See Appendix
- Virtual Learning Success Profile⁷

Madison Metropolitan School District – Madison Virtual Campus & Online Learning

Meri Tunison, Teacher Leader
matunison@madison.k12.wi.us

Additional Resources

- See Appendix
- MVC Introduction⁸
- MVC Student Contract⁹

Rural Virtual Academy

Charles Heckel, Principal
charles.heckel@ruralvirtual.org

Additional Resource

- RVA Handbook¹⁰

⁷http://www.gbaps.org/why_choose_gbaps/district_programs/online_learning/virtual_learning_success_profile/

⁸https://docs.google.com/document/d/15JvWRR2U5Vefm_IZ5mbDkB5Tg6aocZ_8lsXvODryhXA/edit

⁹<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1jXXjYcN576tRA7t3UOZecZWdfBamtU-wi65v2vWYk0/edit>

¹⁰<https://www.ruralvirtual.org/site/RVAHandbook2017-2018HighSchool.pdf>

Appendix

Green Bay

Student Agreement for Online Courses

(Print last page, sign, return to school counselor)

Access to the technology utilized in online courses imposes certain responsibilities and obligations. Appropriate use is ethical, honest, and legal.

- It demonstrates respect for physical and intellectual property, system security protocols, and individuals' rights to privacy as well as freedom from intimidation, harassment, and unwarranted annoyance.
- All district technology policies apply in this learning environment.
- Please refer any questions to the local district contacts.

Acceptable Use Policy

The Green Bay Area Public School District [Acceptable Use Policy](#) (AUP) applies to online work, emails, and postings related to an online course.

Academic Honor Policy

1. I understand and agree that all work submitted must represent my original ideas and/or I will appropriately cite all relevant sources if it is not completely original. Failure to do so can result in receiving a failing grade for the assignment and possibly for the course. I may be required to submit the assignment without credit.
2. I understand that no one other than me can complete any portion of an assignment, activity or exam or make revisions to an assignment, activity or exam. Doing so may result in a failing grade and my immediate removal from the course.
3. I understand that I may be assigned proctored assessments, oral quizzes in person or on the phone or be asked to discuss the process used in research for a project or paper. These are standard assessment tools in online courses. Most courses have a proctored semester exam or culminating activity. It is my responsibility to contact the online school or program office and give advance notice of proctored assessments or tests to set up an appointment.
4. I understand that, in keeping with the Wisconsin eSchool Network policy, if I am not able to pass the semester exam, credit will not be awarded for the course regardless of the grades I earned throughout the course. (Alternate assessment methods may be used at the discretion of the local district based on individual needs.)

Parent Support

- I will contact my students' school counselor or Alison Manwiller, at agmanwiller@gbaps.org to address any challenge to ensure my student has access to the technology required.

- I have read this contract and will support my child in these expectations.
- I will provide internet access at home and will take an active interest in my child's online progress by reading the emailed Progress Reports or making a periodic check of my student's online grade book.
- If I have questions will contact my students' teacher or, Alison Manwiller (agmanwiller@gbaps.org).

Drop Window and Trial Period

1. I understand that online courses may not be a good fit for me. I may withdraw from the course within a drop window of two weeks (Summer Session = 10 days) from the date of my enrollment, without consequence to my transcript or Grade Point Average.
2. If technical problems occur, I am expected to work those out during the first week of my enrollment by accessing technical support from my Local Education Guide (LEG).
3. I understand that I may be administratively dropped for any of the following reasons:
 1. I do not login and meet the recommended pace reflected in my grade book.
 2. I do not successfully submit at least one appropriately completed assignment within 7 calendar days of my enrollment. (Submitting a pace chart/study plan does not meet this requirement.)
 3. I am not on pace by the end of the drop window, and have not been making sincere effort to meet this requirement through communication or face-to-face support from my online teacher and/or LEG
 4. I have not replied to communication from my online teacher and/or LEG regarding my lack of engagement or progress.

Course Progress Expectations

1. Attendance for my online course is measured by successful completion of assignments and activities, communication with my teacher, participation in discussion threads, and any other teacher directed activities and interaction with the online lessons.
2. I understand that communication between my teacher or my LEG and me will frequently occur through email. I will check the email account associated with my enrollment several times each week.
3. I understand that I am expected to communicate with my teacher on a regular basis and read any emails the teacher sends.
4. I understand that the minimum attendance requirement means that I must appropriately complete and successfully submit at least one assignment every week. Failure to do so for any 3 weeks within the semester may result in my being removed from the course with a W/F.
5. I understand that all assigned work should to be completed according to the due dates provided on my online grade book.
6. I need to plan and work ahead if family or personal activities will limit course activities at any given time.

7. I understand that any assignments submitted beyond the due date may not receive full credit. Points may be deducted for late assignments. Blank submissions are not considered submitted assignments.
8. I understand that I am expected to complete no less than 90% of all coursework, including a proctored final exam; if I do not accomplish these, credit will not be issued and an "F" will be added to my transcript for this course.

Student Agreement for Online Courses, Signature Page

I have read and understand the online expectations and consequences outlined in the Student Agreement for Online Courses, above, and agree to abide by them.

Failure to do so may, upon investigation, result in consequences up to and including being terminated from the online course.

Student _____ **Date** _____

Parent /Guardian _____

Madison

The template examples below are for weekly progress reports sent by mentors/coaches to students. Typically Guardians, Counselors, Coaches, and students are copied on these emails. Coaches can personalize the message when sending individually to each student, or can send these in bulk as needed. The tags pull information into the fields to show a more accurate report of student progress.

Dear [FIRST_NAME] [LAST_NAME],

This email is a progress report for your current [COURSE_NAME] course. After reviewing Buzz/Genius on [DATE], your current status is:

ON PACE (2 or less missing assignments and earning a 60% or higher at the time of progress check)

Current Grade: [CURRENT_GRADE]

Please note that the current grade does not include missing assignments.

Missing Assignments: [ASSIGNMENTS_BEHIND]

Missing Assignments Detail:

[ASSIGNMENTS_DETAILS]

I will be reviewing your course progress on a weekly basis or as needed. Please remember that I am here to assist you in anyway possible with your online course. If circumstances develop with your course that

you are not sure how to handle, please allow me to have the opportunity to help you problem solve any issues.

[SIGNATURE]

NOTE: This information provides a snapshot of current progress. For detailed information, please reference your Buzz gradebook directly. The status of ungraded assignments, exempted assignments, and assignments requiring resubmission are not reflected in this report.

Dear [FIRST_NAME] [LAST_NAME],

This email is a progress report for your current [COURSE_NAME] course. After reviewing Buzz (Genius) on [DATE], your current status is:

Behind (3-4 missing assignments and/or earning a 60% or higher at the time of progress check).

Current Grade: [CURRENT_GRADE]

Missing Assignments: [ASSIGNMENTS_BEHIND]

Missing Assignments Detail:

[ASSIGNMENTS_DETAILS]

Please remember the course progress expectations detailed in MVC Student Contract you agreed to. The following course progress expectations are applicable to your situation:

- 1. In order to stay on pace, I understand that I will need to do **3-5** assignments per week on average according to the **Due Dates** provided on my Grade screen.*
- 2. I understand that if I fall **5 or more** assignments behind pace that I will be considered "currently failing" the course even if my grade is passing. An F may appear on the progress report or report card. A failing grade will affect my eligibility for extra-curricular activities. **(Student Athletes, please take note!)***
- 3. If I fall **8 or more** assignments behind, my parents and I will be given written notice and I will have 7 calendar days to get within 2 assignments of "on pace" or I will be dropped from the course.*

I will be reviewing your course progress on a weekly basis or as needed. Please remember that I am here to assist you in anyway possible with your online course. If circumstances develop with your course that you are not sure how to handle, please allow me to have the opportunity to help you problem solve any issues. It is in your best interest to contact me ASAP to discuss your progress plan. I copied your online teacher, counselor, and parent/guardian on this email so they can assist with this matter as well.

[SIGNATURE]

NOTE: This information provides a snapshot of current progress. For detailed information, please reference your Buzz gradebook directly. The status of ungraded assignments, exempted assignments, and assignments requiring resubmission are not reflected in this report.

Dear [FIRST_NAME] [LAST_NAME],

This email is a progress report for your current [COURSE_NAME] course. As of [DATE], your current status is:

FAILING due to one or more of the following reasons:

- * **5 or more missing assignments at the time of review (NOTE: 0% scores that can be redone count as missing assignments)**
- * **60% or below content grade**

Start Date: [START_DATE]

End Date: [END_DATE]

Current Grade: [CURRENT_GRADE]

Assignments Behind: [ASSIGNMENTS_BEHIND]

Missing Assignments:

[ASSIGNMENTS_DETAILS]

Please recall the course progress expectations detailed in MVC Student Contract you agreed to. The following course progress expectations are applicable to your situation:

1. In order to stay on pace, I understand that I will need to do **3-5** assignments per week on average according to the **Due Dates** provided on my Grade screen.
2. I understand that if I fall **5 or more** assignments behind pace that I will be considered “currently failing” the course even if my grade is passing. An F may appear on the progress report or report card. A failing grade will affect my eligibility for extra-curricular activities. **(Student Athletes, please take note!)**
3. If I fall **8 or more** assignments behind, my parents and I will be given written notice and I will have 7 calendar days to get within 2 assignments of “on pace” or I will be dropped from the course.

I will be reviewing your course progress on a weekly basis or as needed. Please remember that I am here to assist you in anyway possible with your online course. If circumstances develop

with your course that you are not sure how to handle, please allow me to have the opportunity to try to problem solve hindering issues. It is in your best interest to contact me ASAP to discuss your progress plan. I copied your online teacher, counselor, and parent/guardian on this email so they can assist with this matter as well.

[SIGNATURE]

NOTE: This information provides a snapshot of current progress. For detailed information, please reference your Buzz gradebook directly. The status of ungraded assignments, exempted assignments, and assignments requiring resubmission are not reflected in this report.

Dear [FIRST_NAME] [LAST_NAME],

This is a reminder that you are not on pace in your [COURSE_NAME] online course. Currently, you have [ASSIGNMENTS_BEHIND] missing assignments and are **at risk of being dropped from the course.**

This is your written notice of the potential drop.

If you have any of these assignments done, please submit them to your teacher as soon as possible.

Current Grade: [CURRENT_GRADE]

Please note that the current grade does not include missing assignments.

Missing Assignments: [ASSIGNMENTS_BEHIND]

Missing Assignments Detail:

[ASSIGNMENTS_DETAILS]

Please remember the following from your MVC Student Contract:

If I fall 8 or more assignments behind, my parents and I will be given written notice and I will have 7 calendar days to get within 2 assignments of "on pace" or I will be dropped from the course.

Let me know if you have any questions or concerns -- I am here to assist you in anyway possible with your online course. It is in your best interest to contact me ASAP to discuss your progress plan. I copied your online teacher, counselor, and parent/guardian on this email so they can assist with this matter as well.

[SIGNATURE]

NOTE: This information provides a snapshot of current progress. For detailed information, please reference your Buzz gradebook directly. The status of ungraded assignments, exempted assignments, and assignments requiring resubmission are not reflected in this report.

Madison Virtual Campus – 2017-2018

Compelling Needs for High School

MMSD high school students can, if approved, take 1-2 online courses per semester. For each course, the student must have a compelling need which will be prioritized according to the list below.

REQUIRED COMPELLING NEED: Inability to take face-to-face class

Students should not be considered for online courses with Madison Virtual Campus (MVC) unless the student is unable to take the class face-to-face for any of the following reasons:

- The course needed is *not offered at their home school* but is otherwise a district-offered course
- The student has *schedule conflicts* that cannot be resolved in terms of accessing the face-to-face version of the class
- The student has a *psychological or physical condition* that makes a face-to-face course at the home school an inappropriate, unsafe, or otherwise an infeasible scheduling option, has a *psychological or physical condition* that makes a face-to-face course at the home school an inappropriate, unsafe, or otherwise an infeasible scheduling option

Once the above compelling need is established, please proceed to the rest of the compelling needs for further guidance regarding how to prioritize requests.

PRIORITY COMPELLING NEEDS:

1. Graduation

- a. Student needs the course to be “on-track” for graduation with his/her grade cohort. Seniors have priority above others in general for this consideration. This compelling need can also be used to determine priority between students who are requesting a core content course that is generally required in MMSD, for example, and an elective that is not generally required.

2. Graduation Requirement/Credit Recovery

- a. Student failed the course in a face-to-face course environment and need to take it at the next possible available time, but is otherwise unable to do so face-to-face again.
- b. Students needing to achieve a passing grade in a course as a graduation requirement will have priority over students who wish to take the course for grade improvement (AVID, for example).
- c. Students needing to achieve a passing grade in a NCAA-eligible course will have priority over grade improvement requests.

3. Advancement to next level

- a. Student wishes to take a course not otherwise available at their home school for the purpose of advancing to the next level of their coursework. The course must be usable credit for the student’s progress towards graduation, and can be elective or subject-specific credit. *MVC is a preferable option to enrolling in Youth*

Options and Course Options to accomplish this.

LESSER COMPELLING NEEDS:

If there are available MVC seats after the first few weeks of school, and all other priority compelling needs have been met, consider offering them to students who have the following needs.

4. Grade Improvement

- a. AVID students are allowed to request an online course as a means to improve a grade achieved in a face-to-face course. Please see note about AVID students below.
- b. A non-AVID students who is striving to meet other post-high school academic programs that require particular grade thresholds for certain classes to be met, may take an MVC course for grade improvement, provided that they have demonstrated the need for such an opportunity.
- c. Grade improvement requests will be prioritized according to graduation requirements.

5. Career/Pathway Interest

- a. Student wishes to take a course not otherwise available at their home school for the purpose of advancing along an identified career pathway.

6. Personal Interest

- a. Student wishes to take a course not otherwise available at their home school for the purpose of pursuing a personal interest. The course must be usable credit for the student's progress towards graduation, and can be elective or subject-specific credit.
- b. Student wishes to take the course due to prior academic challenges with the available home school teacher (such as the student has already failed the course with this teacher and no other teacher is available).

NON-COMPELLING NEEDS:

A student **does not meet** the threshold of a compelling needs if:

- Student wishes to avoid taking the course at their home school due to conflicts with teachers, course content, learning style, etc...
- Student wishes to take the online course as an overload but has no other compelling reason for taking it.

AVID STUDENTS

Madison Virtual Campus may be deemed an appropriate learning option for AVID students to meet MMSD high school course requirements if they demonstrate a compelling need (including grade improvement). AVID students *must* still meet the following need: they are unable to take the otherwise take the course face-to-face.

Additionally, before requesting an MVC course, AVID students *must* meet with their counselor to determine if the course will meet their academic and course needs. AVID students enrolled in MVC are expected to follow all registration processes and meet expectations outlined in the MVC Student Contract.

STUDENTS WITH INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAMS (IEPs)

Madison Virtual Campus may be deemed an appropriate learning option for students with IEPs to meet MMSD high school course requirements if they demonstrate a compelling need (including grade improvement). Additionally, the student's counselor *must* provide the MVC Mentor with the student's IEP, or at minimum an appropriate summary of the IEP, so that the Mentor can properly advise whether the services and accommodations required by the IEP can be met through an online course.

WDLC Contacts

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Invested Partners

- Appleton Area School District
- Baraboo School District
- Grantsburg School District
- Green Bay Area Public School District
- School District of Janesville
- Kenosha Unified School District
- Kiel Area School District
- Kimberly Area School District
- Madison Metropolitan School District
- Middleton-Cross Plains Area School District
- Oshkosh Area School District
- Racine Unified School District
- Sheboygan Area School District
- Wisconsin Virtual School (CESA 9)

Affiliate Partners

- Cameron School District
- Chetek School District
- DeForest Area School District
- Franklin Public School District
- Kewaskum School District
- School District of LaCrosse
- Medford School District (Rural Virtual Academy)
- School District of Nekoosa
- River Valley School District
- School District of Superior
- Stevens Point Area School District
- Triton Network
- Watertown Unified School District
- Waunakee Community School District

Notes



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