

Roundtable Session Notes

Session Title: Virtual and Brick and Mortar Schools - A Partnership

I Virtual Learning Academy Charter School in NH description
founded 4 ½ years ago -- 700 enrollment -->14,000 today
not affiliated with school district (approved by State Board of Ed) -- funding from state only
create a non-competitive option (multiple pathways to graduation)
kids can enroll anytime -- their schedule and their learning needs
grades 6 -14
full time high school student not full time middle school student
100 full time students currently
instructors all around the world
12 full time instructors (125 students/ea)
majority work full time in b&m environment and parttime with Virtual Learning Academy
partner with local schools -- philosophy
multiple pathways for students: where they graduate from does not make a difference to VLA

II Charter Law

III Middle school struggles -- providing programming for kids

geographical issues -- moved away from high school and so advanced classes were difficult to launch -- in terms of additional courses so this was filled with online learning
out of 115 -120 students 25% pursued the coursework (resources made available to them at home)
instructors work closely with parents: for ex., monthly phone calls
Unified Arts Block and also offered Advanced Courses -- reserved library, had headsets and appropriate software
some resistance but ultimately people came on board
bump in the road: accepting the credit -- the high school accepting the credit
end of course: print out transcript and that is mailed to high school
wanted to increase enrollment: not voluntary anymore: signing students up: literacy course
--cyberbullying (8th grade students participating)
21st century skills for students -- that is the reason why students are encouraged to take online courses
learning experience for coordinators of the program as well
Blackboard IM -- mock sessions with students
Facilities: one lab designated for instructors
positive experience

VLA provides:

1. specific training
2. access to Student Information System (SIR) -- see grades and comments
3. parent/student/teacher connection

*No student can participate without a phone call with student and parent (the Welcome Call) and then monthly contact via phone call

Responses to RT questions:

- Use Moodle moving (content) and Go to Meeting (communication tool)
- Moodle grades integrated into SIR
- Asynchronous instruction
- NCAA credit approval -- first to be okayed under new process
- content is purchased from Florida Virtual School
- teachers may supplement
- virtual PD -- how teachers plan for the program
- PD team work around apps and tools in content delivery
- chose FLA because they were around for a long time
- faculty reception to online instruction? pivot point wants the faculty to think about blended learning -- advancing math and sciences -- more AP courses -- teachers all use Moodle anyway -- next step is looking at your contract and making it possible for you to become online teachers as well
- teacher's job description: attend training, introductory call -- making contact (expectations); communication is typically weekly (page -- phone calls from students or email from students, office hours-- synchronous component); instructors single most important job is to build a relationship with student and their families (interaction is one on one)
- teacher evaluation: standards and expectations (includes are they communicating enough; coaching, encouraging, deliberate communications to students, follow log-ons, flexibility in pace but students must complete the work -- don't want a gap of two or three weeks where students are not doing work; competency based not time based; personalized learning in terms of budgeting time for coursework; all courses have oral quizzes aligned with monthly chats; every oral assessment is a proficiency assessment; student voice is established so that it authenticates work; oral quiz reflection on work submitted: series of questions -- a conversation
- partnered with all but one high school in NH
- partnership and flexibility how schools work with Virtual Academy grades is up to local school
- NH allows dual enrollment -- the argument of the legislature pays 1.1, but Virtual Academy response to legislature is that the .1 they are paying for helps them avoid the 5th year of high school -- NH legislature agrees with Virtual Academy
- district is being paid for seat time -- Virtual Academy is a different funding model (Funding based on competency) -- we do not get paid unless students complete the work