

Michigan Association for Secondary School Principals Online Learning Survey Report

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Michigan Association for Secondary School Principals

Online Learning Survey Report

Executive Summary

In May 2013, the Michigan Association for Secondary School Principals (MASSP) in partnership with *Michigan Virtual University*® (MVU®) created a survey to assess the current state and anticipated needs of online learning in Michigan's secondary schools. The survey used a series of multiple choice rating questions along with a few open-ended questions to learn more about topics such as online learning use, vendor satisfaction and criteria, expected enrollment changes for next year, and challenges and opportunities brought about by the new online learning policy.

MASSP members were provided with a link to the survey instrument by email and a weekly webline that reaches 1600 people. The survey was open from May 1st until July 1st, and respondents were able to go in as often as necessary to complete the survey. Three hundred and forty four people clicked on the survey link to start the survey; two hundred thirty four people (approximately 14.6 %) completed the survey though they may not have chosen to answer all of the questions.

The survey results indicate a range of involvement with online courses – from 1 enrollment to 1500 – and the same vast difference in people's opinions of online learning – from not wanting to offer any courses to welcoming the opportunity to prepare students for online requirements in college and at work.

Among the high points are the following findings:

1. 87% of respondents had students enrolling in online courses during the 2012-13 school year.
2. 74.7% of respondents indicated it was slightly or very important for online courses to include Michigan certified teachers.
3. The greatest needs respondents anticipated for the 2013-14 school year were
 - preparing teachers to teach in an online or blended learning environment,
 - setting up blended learning, training teachers to mentor online learners,
 - evaluating online program and teacher effectiveness, and
 - updating the school improvement plan to better reflect online and blended learning.
4. The most often expressed concern was assuring or maintaining program, course, and/or content quality, rigor, and/or standards.
5. The most often noted opportunity was the increase in choices and access for what the school does not or cannot offer.

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Respondent Role and Use of Online Courses

Approximately two out of every three survey respondents indicated that they were building principals. A quarter of respondents were assistant principals with the remaining respondent selecting the other category. Analysis of the “Other” category text response showed this category included primarily Superintendents or Superintendent/Principals (6), Curriculum Directors (6), Counselors (3), and a variety of coordinators.

Table 1. What is your position at the school?

Position	Responses
Principals	220 (66.3%)
Assistant principals	81 (24.4%)
Other	31 (9.3%)

Branching was implemented to ask a differing series of questions to respondents whose schools used online learning during the 2012-13 school year. As might have been predicted, a high percentage—about 9 out of 10—survey respondents worked in schools that had online options available to students in 2012-13.

Table 2. Did students in your school enroll in online courses during the 2012-13 school year?

Online Enrollments	Responses
Yes	289 (87%)
No	43 (13%)

Vendor Satisfaction and Selection Criteria

Survey respondents who indicated that their schools had online enrollments during the 2012-13 school year were asked to rate their level of satisfaction with various online providers. Of the providers listed, Michigan Virtual School had the most ratings with 130. The next highest number of ratings was Edgenuity (formerly e2020) with 98. Online offerings from the respondent’s own district had the highest level of satisfied respondents with 82.9% of the 27 respondents who offered courses through their district choosing this rating. Three other vendors, Edgenuity, MVS, and Lincoln Interactive (17 respondents) had 70% or more of the respondents who used them rating their satisfaction level as satisfied.

Table 3. How would you rate your level of satisfaction with the following online course providers?

Vendor	# of Respondents	# (%) Dissatisfied	% Neither	% Satisfied
Apex	39	8 (20.5%)	8 (20.5%)	23 (59%)
Aventa	41	5 (12.2%)	8 (19.5%)	28 (68.3%)
BYU	50	9 (18%)	15 (30%)	26 (52%)
Compass Learning (Odyssey)	34	7 (20.6%)	8 (23.5%)	19 (55.9%)
Edgenuity (e2020)	98	8 (8.2%)	16 (16.3%)	74 (75.5%)
Edmentum (Plato)	16	2 (12.5%)	6 (37.5%)	8 (50%)
EdConnect	3	-	2 (66.7%)	1 (33.3%)
Florida Virtual School	24	5 (20.8%)	6 (25%)	13 (54.2%)
K-12, Inc.	23	8 (34.8%)	8 (34.8%)	7 (30.4%)
Lincoln Interactive	17	2 (11.8%)	3 (17.6%)	12 (70.6%)
MVS	130	9 (6.9%)	26 (20%)	95 (73.1%)
NovaNet	24	6 (25%)	9 (37.5%)	9 (37.5%)
University of Nebraska – Lincoln	23	6 (26.1%)	4 (17.4%)	13 (56.5%)
Way Program	27	10 (37%)	9 (33.3%)	8 (29.6%)
Your District	35	1 (2.9%)	5 (14.3%)	29 (82.9%)
Other Provider	51	4 (7.8%)	16 (31.4%)	31 (60.8%)

Survey respondents who indicated that their schools had online enrollments during the 2012-13 school year were also asked to provide insight into how important specific criteria (affordability, alignment to Michigan standards, rigor and quality, etc.) were in selecting an online provider. Of the criteria surveyed, the highest percentage of respondents ranking a criteria as very important was “alignment to MI standards” (88.4%) followed by “rigor and quality” second (81.4%) and student preparedness in subsequent coursework (67.2%) third. The three criteria with the lowest percentage of respondents choosing “very important” were “course includes online instructor” (49%), “customer support” (53.9%), and “wide range of course titles” (56.9%).

Table 4. Please tell us how important the following were in selecting your online provider(s).

Criteria	Not Important	Slightly Unimportant	Neither Important or Unimportant	Slightly Important	Very Important
Affordability	1 (.05%)	3 (1.5%)	9 (4.6%)	64 (32.5%)	120 (60.9%)
Alignment to MI Standards	2 (1.0%)	-	4 (2%)	17 (8.5%)	176 (88.4%)
Rigor and Quality	-	-	7 (3.5%)	30 (15.1%)	162 (81.4%)
Courses Included	6 (3.1%)	5 (2.6%)	30 (15.3%)	59 (30.1%)	96 (49%)
Online Instructor	-	2 (1%)	19 (9.8%)	68 (35.2%)	104 (53.9%)
Customer Support	1 (0.5%)	1 (0.5%)	15 (7.7%)	67 (34.4%)	111 (56.9%)
Wide Range of Course Titles	4 (2.1%)	2 (1%)	10 (5.1%)	48 (24.6%)	131 (67.2%)
How Well Online Course Prepares Students for Subsequent Course					

Survey respondents who indicated that their schools had online enrollments during the 2012-13 school year were also asked to estimate the number of enrollments in .5 credit online courses their school had in 2012-

13. In total, the sum of respondents' estimates came to 27,971 enrollments. The largest number of .5 credit enrollments from a single respondent was 1500; the lowest number of enrollments was 0.

A follow-up question then asked the respondents to estimate the percentage of these enrollments that included a highly-qualified teacher supplied by the online course provider. Table 5 below shows the results of this question group in bins of 10. Seventy-two of the respondents (36.7%) estimated that 90-100% of the online courses offered by their school were associated with a highly-qualified online teacher whereas 51 respondents (26%) estimated that less than 10% of the online courses they offered did so.

Table 5. About what percentage of the online enrollments taken by students in your school included a highly qualified teacher supplied by the online course provider?

Percentage of Enrollments with Highly Qualified Teachers	# and % of Respondents
0-9	51 (26%)
10-19	11 (5.6%)
20-29	18 (9.2%)
30-39	5 (2.6%)
40-49	3 (1.5%)
50-59	15 (7.7%)
60-69	3 (1.5%)
70-79	6 (3.1%)
80-89	12 (6.1%)
90-100	72 (36.7%)

While Table 5 shows groupings by respondents, it does not take into account the fact that differing numbers of enrollments occurred within the respondents' schools. When weighting for enrollments, approximately 14,491 of the 27,971 enrollments included a highly-qualified teacher supplied by the online course provider. This represents only about 52% of the online enrollments from respondents' schools.

Anticipated Change in Enrollments by Content Area for 2013-14

To better understand anticipated change in online enrollments for the upcoming year, respondents who offered online learning opportunities were asked how they anticipated their enrollment numbers to change by content area between the 2012-13 school year and the 2013-14 school year. Most respondents expected no change or a slight increase, particularly in Math, English, Electives, and Science.

Table 6. Please indicate for each content area how you expect the number of online enrollments to change between the 2012-13 school year and the 2013-14 school year.

Content Area	Large Decrease	Slight Decrease	No Change	Slight Increase	Large Increase
Math	1 (0.5%)	13 (6.6%)	91 (46.2%)	77 (39.1%)	15 (7.6%)
English	-	16 (8.2%)	93 (47.4%)	76 (38.8%)	11 (5.6%)
Science	-	14 (7.2%)	105 (54.1%)	66 (34%)	9 (4.6%)
Social Studies	1 (0.5%)	12 (6.3%)	107 (56%)	60 (31.4%)	11 (5.8%)
World Languages	5 (2.6%)	10 (5.2%)	95 (49.2%)	58 (30.1%)	25 (13%)
AP	2 (1.1%)	7 (3.7%)	128 (67.4%)	47 (24.7%)	6 (3.2%)
Electives	3 (1.6%)	5 (2.7%)	97 (51.6%)	65 (34.6%)	18 (9.6%)

Perspectives from Schools Not Offering Online Learning in 2012-13

Respondents who indicated their schools did not offer online learning options in 2012-13 skipped to a different set of questions. One of these questions asked respondents to identify the factors that contributed to their decision not to offer online learning to their students. The results indicate that the greatest reason for not providing online learning experiences is that students are not asking for it.

Table 7. You said that your school did not have any online enrollments in the 2012-13 school year. Please tell us which of the following were factors in not offering online learning through your school. (Select all that apply.)

Factor	Responses
Concern about Course Cost	11
Concern about Course Quality	11
Concern about Online Instructor Quality	9
No Student Demand	28
No Support from Local Teachers	8
Other*	11

*Although there was space for an explanation to be provided, the only comment made in this category was, "Traditionally, Alternative Ed students have not had success with online courses."

In considering Table 7 above, it is worth noting that 43 respondents indicated that their schools did not offer online courses in 2012-13 making them eligible to answer this question. However, given the style of the check-all question type, differentiating between those that left the box unchecked because they meant to versus leaving the box unchecked to skip over the questions is not possible. For this reason, we did not include percentage estimates. For readers who choose to divide the number of respondents by 43, please keep in mind that this would be the lowest boundary for the actual percentage since some of the 43 respondents may have intentionally not answered the question.

Similar to a question asked of respondents that answered "yes" to the online course offerings in 2012-13 question, respondents who did not offer online learning opportunities were asked how they anticipated their enrollment numbers to change by content area between the 2012-13 school year and the 2013-14 school year. Most thought that they would continue not to offer online courses, though some subset envisioned slight increases, particularly in World Languages and Math.

Table 8. Please indicate for each content area how you expect the number of online enrollments to change between the 2012-13 school year and the 2013-14 school year.

Content Area	No Change	Slight Increase	Large Increase
Math	32 (84.2%)	6 (15.8%)	-
English	33 (89.2%)	4 (10.8%)	-
Science	32 (86.5%)	5 (13.5%)	-
Social Studies	35 (92.1%)	3 (7.9%)	-
World Languages	31 (77.5%)	9 (22.5%)	-
AP	33 (89.2%)	3 (8.1%)	1(2.7%)
Electives	33 (86.8%)	5 (13.2%)	-

Challenges and Opportunities

The final five questions in the survey were directed to all respondents regardless of whether they worked in schools that offered online learning options to students in 2012-13. The first of the five questions was designed to uncover the extent of the need to provide professional development for teachers and support for school programs. Respondents were asked to identify the tasks they would need assistance with during the 2013-14 school year. Respondents could select all options that applied.

The greatest need indicated by respondents was preparing teachers to teach in an online or blended learning environment, followed by setting up blended learning, training teachers to mentor online learners, evaluating online program and teacher effectiveness, and updating the school improvement plan to better reflect online and blended learning.

Table 9. Which of the following are needs you anticipate your school will have in the 2013-14 school year? (Select all that apply.)

Anticipated Needs	Responses
Help setting up a virtual school (full time)	25
Help setting up a virtual program (part time/supplemental)	52
Help setting up a blended learning solution	100
Help marketing online program/school inside or outside you community	61
Help updating our school improvement plan to better reflect online and blended learning environments	86
Help with online content development	65
Help vetting online content	53
Help with evaluating online program/teacher effectiveness	93
Help training our teachers to teach online or in a blended learning environment	121
Help training our teachers to mentor online learners	104
We have no needs when it comes to online learning.	30

The second and third questions in this group asked about the governor’s proposed policy change (which has since become law through Public Act 60 of 2013) making it possible for students to take up to two online courses a semester. Respondents were asked to describe what challenges and what opportunities such a change would create for their school.

The question on the greatest concern or challenge read:

Beginning with the 2013-14 school year, the governor has proposed allowing students to take up to two online courses per semester from their local school or from other schools located anywhere in the state. If that policy is implemented, what would be your greatest concern or challenge?

The most often mentioned concern was in the general topic of Curriculum: assuring or maintaining program, course, and/or content quality, rigor, and/or standards (48). Technology – including infrastructure, internet access, hardware, and equal access – was seen as a challenge for 34 respondents. Mentoring, monitoring, and supervision and staffing for those roles were the next greatest concern (31). The greatest challenge directly related to students was criteria for determining eligibility (13) and verifying that the work was done by the student (12). Other broad categories included Staff, Students, Outcomes, Resources, and Administration.

The question on opportunity read:

If the two online courses option does come to fruition, what do you think will be the biggest opportunity for your school?

The greatest opportunities fell within the general category of Options where overwhelmingly, respondents identified as positive the increase in choices and access for what the school doesn't or can't offer (64). The other categories were Conservation or Expansion of Resources, Flexibility, Outcomes, and Curriculum.

The fourth question in this group asked respondents to rank the importance of having a Michigan-certificated teacher included in the online course. The results reflect a concern expressed in the open-ended question above: the quality of online teachers' skills. This item was ranked as Very Important by 52% of respondents.

Table 10. Please tell us how important it is for you to offer online courses to your students that include Michigan certificated teachers, as opposed to educators from other states.

Ranking	Responses
Not Important at All	17 (7.6%)
Slightly Unimportant	13 (5.8%)
Neither Unimportant or Important	27 (12%)
Slightly Important	51 (22.7%)
Very Important	117 (52%)

Finally, respondents were asked if they would be interested in being part of a future focus group on online and blended learning. Over 60 individuals expressed an interest.