



State Policy and Local Implementation—Online Learning and SWDs

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Overview of the Session

- Learn about state policies and definitions of online learning, preliminary data from interviews of selected states on their data collection practices on students with disabilities (SWDs) in various online education settings, and other IDC resources on this topic
- Hear a panel discussion of state and local district administrators on policies and practice concerning SWDs engaged in online education

Workgroup Products

- State Policy Scan
- State Interview Findings
- White Paper (under review)
- B5 Data Reporting Tool (in progress)

IDC State Policy Scan White Paper



White paper: Summary of State Policy on Online Learning

To download visit the IDEA Data Resource Library:
<https://ideadata.org/resource-library>

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Background

- The rapid expansion of digital contents and online education environments continues across the nation.
- A dearth of research exists on the implication of online learning for SWDs (COLSD, 2014).
- There are no data requirements under Sections 616 and 618 of IDEA on the placement of SWDs in an online education environment.

Why This Policy Scan?

- To quickly gather information on policies and guidance from a small group of states
- To share findings with the primary audience of IDC
- To facilitate discussion on this emerging topic
- To help IDC identify specific TA needs related to this fast-moving policy area

How States Were Selected

- Identified seven states that either:
 - Required online experience as part of high school graduation, or
 - Reported a high number of online course enrollments

States Included in the Scan

States	HS Graduation Requirement	High Online Course Enrollment in 2012
Alabama	✓	44,332
Florida	✓	303,329
Georgia		28,876
Idaho		17,627
Michigan	✓	19,822
North Carolina	✓	97,710
Virginia	✓	6,460

Note. Online course enrollment estimates are based on iNACOL (February 2013).

Key Findings

- States use a wide range of terms and definitions to describe online learning.
- Many different types of online learning options are available to students.
- All students are eligible to participate in online learning options.

Key Findings (cont'd)

- States require online learning providers to make enrollment data and performance accountability measures available to public.
- Implementation of IEP or 504 plans of students enrolled in online learning are the responsibility of local school districts.

Different Terms and Definitions

- States use a wide range of terms and definitions to describe online learning.
- Different terms are used even within a state.

Terms Used by States

Terms/Names	Number of States
Blended learning	7
Online learning/experiences/course/programs/schools	6
Virtual schools/education program/instruction	6
Distance learning	5
Digital learning/instruction	5
Cyber (charter) schools	2
eLearning	1
Mobile learning	1
Remote educational program	1

Descriptions of Online Learning

- Definitions or descriptions vary across states.
- However, they contain several common elements.

Common Elements

Common Elements

Interactive setting

- Synchronous or asynchronous

Use technology to deliver instruction

- Computer based
- Internet based (online)
- Audio and video

Separate students from instructors

Require certified teachers as instructors

Distinguish between:

- Schools and courses
- Full- and part-time options
- Credit bearing and non-credit bearing

Online Learning Options

Types	Number of States
State-supported program	7
District-supported program	5
Full-time, non-charter schools	2
Full-time, charter schools	5
Part time/supplemental	8
Blended schools	2

In Summary:

- States' policies or guidance on online learning are broad and inclusive of all students, including SWDs.
- State policies specific to SWDs and online learning are scarce.
- States vary with regard to the amount of data and information available as well as the degree of specificity in policies and guidance.

Considerations for Additional Resources

- To help states collect, identify, and report data that provide better insight into how SWDs are served in this environment
- White papers, case stories, vignettes that describe various ways for states to consider in gathering and reporting data on SWD in online learning environment
- Updating the current white paper

White Paper #2 (Under Review)

- Reporting Educational Environment for SWDs in various online education settings
 - To address the need for and interest on additional resources that help states collect, identify, and report data that provide better insight into how SWDs are served in online education environments

B5 Data Reporting Tool (In Progress)

- Intended to help state data managers, local data managers, technical assistance providers, and other interested parties report Educational Environments data for SPP/APR Indicator 5
- Graphic display of easy-to-follow decision rules
- Similar approach with an existing IDC resource, [B6 Data Reporting Tools: Educational Environments, Ages 3-5](#)

Panel Discussion

- John Eisenberg, Assistant Superintendent, Division of Special Education and Student Services, VA Department of Education
- Bill Hussey, Director, Exceptional Children Division, North Carolina Department of Public Instruction
- Rick Nettlesheim, Principal, eAchieve Academy, WI, & Director of Online Learning, School District of Waukesha
- Morgan Anderson, Director of Special Education, Provo City School District, Utah

Guiding Questions – State Panel

- Does your state have a definition of online learning?
- What elements measure “success” of student engagement in online learning?
- How does your state report and use the information/ data collected on SWDs who participate in various online learning opportunities, including the state virtual schools?
- How does your state support SWDs and their teachers engaged in online learning?

Guiding Questions – District Panel

- What elements measure “success” of student engagement in online learning?
- How does your district report and use the information collected on students participating in various online learning opportunities?
- How does your school support SWDs and their teachers engaged in online learning?

Q & A

For More Information

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<http://ideadata.org/>



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