



REPORT OF THE INTERNET-BASED INSTRUCTION TASK FORCE

Adopted November 5, 2009

Senator Gary Stanislawski, Chair

REPORT OF THE INTERNET-BASED INSTRUCTION TASK FORCE

INTRODUCTION:

Created in Senate Bill 604 (see Appendix A) of the 2009 Legislative Session, the Task Force on Internet-Based Instruction was directed to:

1. Conduct a comprehensive review of the Internet-based instruction in Oklahoma and recommendations regarding necessary changes to ensure accountability for such programs in public schools; and
2. Make recommendations to the Legislature by November 30, 2009.

TASK FORCE MEMBERS:

The task force was comprised of seven members. Four members were selected from among public school educators and administrators. Two members were designated from the education committees of the Senate and House of Representatives. The final member was the State Superintendent of Public Instruction. The members, their professional affiliation and appointing authorities were as follows:

1. Senator Gary Stanislawski - Chair of Task Force and designee of Chair of the Senate Education Committee;
2. Representative Ann Coody - Vice Chair of Task Force and Chair of the House Common Education Committee;
3. Sandy Garrett - State Superintendent of Public Instruction;
4. Marilyn Bradford - Superintendent, Shawnee Public Schools, appointed by the Governor;
5. Debbie Burchfield - Asst. Supt. for Curriculum and Student Programs, Jenks Public Schools, appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives;
6. Michelle Butler - Assistant Principal, Memorial High School, Tulsa Public Schools, appointed by the President Pro Tempore of the Senate; and
7. Ronald Hutchings - Superintendent, Tishomingo Public Schools, appointed by the Governor.

Lead staff assistance for the Task Force was provided by:

- Kim Bishop, Staff Attorney, House of Representatives; and
- Kim Montgomery, Legislative Analyst, Senate.

REPORT OF THE INTERNET-BASED INSTRUCTION TASK FORCE

TASK FORCE PRESENTERS:

The Task Force convened for its first meeting on September 10, 2009 and held four meetings through November 5, 2009, and heard from the following presenters:

1. Kay Harley, Randy McLerran, James White, Sharon Lease, & Steven Huff - State Department of Education;
2. Jeff Elliott - President and CEO, Advanced Academics, Inc., Oklahoma City, OK;
3. Susan Patrick - President and CEO, International Association for K-12 Online Learning;
4. Myk Garn - Director, Educational Technology, Southern Regional Education Board, Atlanta, GA;
5. Randy Doerneman - Director, Center for Independent and Distance Learning, University of Oklahoma;
6. Dr. Marvin H. Jeter, III - Assistant Superintendent for School Innovation, Tulsa Public Schools;
7. Mr. Ed Sheakley - Executive Secretary, and David Jackson, Associate Executive Secretary, Oklahoma Secondary Schools Activities Association;
8. Mr. Randall Greenway - Vice President, Business Development, K12, Arkansas;
9. Ms. Sherri Remington, Program Director; Ms. Jennifer Grant, Lead Teacher; Ms. Sheri Dittman, Parent of enrolled student; Representing the Oklahoma Virtual Academy;
10. Ms. Robin Schott - Associate State Director, Oklahoma State Department of Career and Technology Education, and Ms. Michelle Keylon, Francis Tuttle Technology Center;
11. Dr. Jason Simeroth - Superintendent, Durant Public Schools, Representing the United Suburban Schools Association;
12. Dr. Jeff Mills - Executive Director, Oklahoma State School Boards Association;
13. Mr. Steven Crawford - Executive Director, Cooperative Council for Oklahoma School Administration;
14. Dr. Freda Deskin - CEO, Advanced Science and Technology Education Center;
15. Ms. Barbalee Blair - Superintendent, Indianhoma Public Schools;
16. Mr. Mark Algood - Superintendent, White Oak Public Schools; and
17. Mr. Lee Manly - Account Manager, Plato Learning.

FINDINGS:

The task force agreed to a definition of online learning as “using contemporary technologies to offer synchronous and/or asynchronous instruction focusing on the learning needs of all students at any time, place or pace”.

Online learning – for students and for teachers – is one of the fastest growing trends in educational uses of technology. The National Center for Education Statistics (2008)

REPORT OF THE INTERNET-BASED INSTRUCTION TASK FORCE

estimated that the number of K-12 public school students enrolling in a technology-based distance education course grew by 65 percent in the two years from 2002-03 to 2004-05. Nationally, on the basis of a more recent survey of school districts, Picciano and Seaman (2009) estimated that more than one million K-12 students took online courses in school year 2007-08, which represents a 47% increase over 2005-06.¹

In his book, *Disrupting Class*, Clay Christensen suggested that by 2019 about half of all high school courses will be provided online.² In Oklahoma, as reported by the State Department of Education, over 1,100 students were enrolled in a full-time online program during the 2008-09 school year. This increased to over 2,500 for the 2009-10 school year, which represented a 163% increase.

A U.S. Department of Education meta-analysis of research literature from 1996 through July 2008 identified more than one thousand empirical studies of online learning and found that, *on average, students in online learning conditions performed better than those receiving face-to-face instruction*. However, it is important to note that an unexpected finding in this analysis was the small number of rigorous published studies contrasting online and face-to-face learning conditions for K-12 students. In light of this small corpus, caution is required in generalizing to the K-12 population because the results are derived, for the most part, from studies in other settings (e.g., medical training, higher education).³

After thorough discussion of the information presented to the task force, members identified the following stakeholder needs that online learning provides:

Meeting the needs of learners who are:

- Seeking credit recovery;
- Wanting to enroll in Advanced Placement courses;
- Needing specialized courses;
- Wanting to meet college entrance requirements;
- Wanting the opportunity for concurrent enrollment;
- Needing expanded course offerings;
- Wanting to move ahead at a faster pace; and
- Needing more individualized instruction.

¹ U.S. Department of Education, Office of Planning, Evaluation, and Policy Development, *Evaluation of Evidence-Based Practices in Online Learning: A Meta-Analysis and Review of Online Learning Studies*, Washington, D.C., 2009.

² Christensen, Clayton M., Curtis W. Johnson, and Michael B. Horn, *Disrupting Class: How Disruptive Innovation Will Change the Way the World Learns*, (McGraw-Hill, 2008) .

³ Picciano, Anthony G. and Seaman, Jeff, *K-12 Online Learning: A 2008 Follow-up of the Survey of U.S. School District Administrators*, Sloan Consortium, 2009.

REPORT OF THE INTERNET-BASED INSTRUCTION TASK FORCE

Providing opportunities for:

- Reducing drop out numbers;
- Serving students who have been suspended;
- Educating students who are homebound, working, have health related problems, or other special needs i.e., autism, ADHD, Tourette's syndrome;
- Potential to expand the school day;
- Meeting remediation requirements;
- Retaining students who reside in the school district and enabling them to stay in home community;
- Potential for state to save money;
- Potential to reach more students in Oklahoma, i.e., home-schoolers, foster children, youthful offenders, and GED for inmates;
- Districts to offer hard-to-staff courses; and
- Reduced cost for low-enrollment courses.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The task force recommends that an effective framework and delivery system for online learning include the following components:

Curriculum and Assessment Rigor and Breadth

An effective framework and delivery system for online learning meets the need for curriculum and assessment rigor and breadth by:

- Integrating Priority Academic Student Skills (PASS) objectives and national standards;
- Providing multiple remediation strategies;
- Providing for a sequenced articulation of courses;
- Integrating and utilizing research based best practices in curriculum instruction and delivery;
- Including a variety of formative and benchmark assessments within the course; and
- Including Oklahoma Core Curriculum Test (OCCT) and End-of-Instruction (EOI) assessments for courses as required.

Accountability Requirements

An effective framework and delivery system for online learning meets accountability requirements when it:

- Requires periodic reports concerning student progress and achievement;

REPORT OF THE INTERNET-BASED INSTRUCTION TASK FORCE

- Provides ongoing communication (teacher to student - weekly, teacher to parent - monthly);
- Requires teachers to be highly qualified, certified, and highly trained for online delivery;
- Defines course completion as meeting or exceeding established standards;
- Provides a process for determining appropriate placement of students on individual education plans by an IEP placement team; and
- Provides proctored test setting (EOI, OCCT) access in the home-district or designated testing center.

The task force recommends that the State Board of Education address the following issues through the adoption of rules:

- Establishment of a review process to identify and certify vendors for online learning, including a uniform payment process;
- Establishment of a uniform grace period for student withdrawal from an online course without academic penalty;
- Establishment of eligibility criteria for student enrollment;
- Creation of a process for ongoing documentation and reporting of progress in and completion of online courses and credits toward graduation to assure that NCLB and graduation requirements are met;
- Establishment of an accountability and governing structure necessary for effective online learning; and
- Authorization by parents, via a form created by SBE, to release state test results to online course providers.

The task force recommends that the following provisions be addressed through the legislative process:

- Establishment of provisions to ensure ongoing enrollment access for students'
- Creation of an admissions process that includes input from parent or guardian, student, and staff, which complies with the criteria established by the State Board of Education;
- Provide for access to extra-curricular activities in the district of residence;
- School districts shall not deny traditional or non-traditional students the opportunity to enroll in educationally-appropriate courses;
- The district providing the online course shall have the right to deny a student enrollment in online courses based on established admissions criteria;
- Establish a system in which course funding follows the student;
- Conduct a further review of the two-year high ADM impact on the State Aid formula for traditional students; and

REPORT OF THE INTERNET-BASED INSTRUCTION TASK FORCE

- Remove the two-year high ADM for virtual students upon transferring out of a district.

The task force recommends that the following provision be addressed by the appropriate outside entity:

- The OSSAA should update its rules for eligibility to accommodate online learners.

CLOSING:

In conclusion, the task force believes that we should strive to provide the best educational experience for each student based on their individual learning styles and needs. While online learning will never replace traditional classrooms entirely, it does provide for the needs of many students to accelerate or broaden their learning experiences, as well as provide opportunities for credit recovery for students who have fallen behind.

We submit this report in fulfillment of the duties of the Task Force on Internet-Based Instruction as set forth in Senate Bill 604 of the 2009 Legislative Session.

REPORT OF THE INTERNET-BASED INSTRUCTION TASK FORCE

APPENDIX A
Legislation Creating Task Force

ENROLLED SENATE
BILL NO. 604

By: Stanislawski of the
Senate

and

Sears and Fields of
the House

An Act relating to schools; creating the Task Force on Internet-Based Instruction; stating duties; providing for membership, appointment, designation of officers, quorum, staff support, and travel reimbursement; requiring report of findings and recommendations by certain deadline; providing for noncodification; providing an effective date; and declaring an emergency.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA:

SECTION 1. NEW LAW A new section of law not to be codified in the Oklahoma Statutes reads as follows:

A. There is hereby created until November 30, 2009, the Task Force on Internet-Based Instruction. The task force shall conduct a comprehensive review of Internet-based instruction in this state and make recommendations regarding necessary changes to ensure accountability for such programs in public schools.

B. The task force shall consist of seven (7) members as follows:

1. Four members shall be selected from among public school educators and administrators as follows:

REPORT OF THE INTERNET-BASED INSTRUCTION TASK FORCE

- a. two members appointed by the Governor,
 - b. one member appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and
 - c. one member appointed by the President Pro Tempore of the State Senate;
2. Two members shall be:
- a. the Chair of the House Common Education Committee or a designee, and
 - b. the Chair of the Senate Education Committee or a designee; and
3. The State Superintendent of Public Instruction or a designee.

C. The President Pro Tempore of the State Senate shall designate the chair of the task force. The Speaker of the Oklahoma House of Representatives shall designate the vice-chair of the task force. Appointments to the task force shall be made by August 31, 2009. Meetings of the task force shall be held at the call of the chair of the task force. Members shall serve at the pleasure of their appointing authorities. A majority of the members of the task force shall constitute a quorum to transact business, but no vacancy shall impair the right of the remaining members to exercise all of the powers of the task force. A vacancy on the task force shall be filled by the original appointing authority. Staff support for the task force shall be provided by the staff of the State Senate and the Oklahoma House of Representatives.

D. Members of the task force shall receive no compensation for serving on the task force, but shall receive travel reimbursement as follows:

1. State employees who are members of the task force shall be reimbursed for travel expenses incurred in the performance of their duties by their respective agencies in accordance with the State Travel Reimbursement Act;

2. All other task force members shall be reimbursed by the appointing authority for travel expenses incurred in the performance of their duties in accordance with the State Travel Reimbursement Act; and

REPORT OF THE INTERNET-BASED INSTRUCTION TASK FORCE

3. Legislative members shall be reimbursed in accordance with Section 456 of Title 74 of the Oklahoma Statutes.

E. The task force shall submit a report by November 30, 2009, to the Governor, the President Pro Tempore of the State Senate, and the Speaker of the Oklahoma House of Representatives. The report shall include findings and recommendations for any statutory or regulatory changes necessary to improve the accountability, funding, and effectiveness of Internet-based instruction.

SECTION 2. This act shall become effective July 1, 2009.

SECTION 3. It being immediately necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health and safety, an emergency is hereby declared to exist, by reason whereof this act shall take effect and be in full force from and after its passage and approval.

Passed the Senate the 30th day of April, 2009.

Presiding Officer of the Senate

Passed the House of Representatives the 22nd day of April, 2009.

Presiding Officer of the House
of Representatives