

Alternative Delivery in Secondary Instruction
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Meeting the academic needs of a diverse student population presents a challenge for personnel in this Midwest suburban school district. Encompassing 82 square miles, the district is home to a population that exceeds 100,000 and includes more than 17,000 K-12 students; approximately 5100 students attend the district's three high schools. High school students come from diverse socio-economic backgrounds and represent more than twenty-five countries, comprising a student body with great variety in cultures and languages.

Five diploma options ranging from 22 to 26 required credits are available and include two honors diplomas, a college preparatory diploma, the school district and GED option diplomas. Students select their courses of study based on career and educational goals; courses options include those designed for the honors, vocational, ELL, special and regular education programs. Teachers utilize innovative course delivery methods, including various technology tools; all high school students have internet access, including district email. Alternative school and homebound instructional programs are provided for a limited number of students with defined needs.

Recognizing that how students learn may depend on the subject matter, the district has implemented an online instructional delivery option. The eCampus program began with an initial offering of three sophomore level core classes in geometry, history, and biology. Limited to an enrollment of eighteen students, each class utilizes the blackboard online system and is available to students at all three high schools.

Numerous planning sessions of the district-wide planning committee preceded the program implementation; several options were investigated prior to the selection of the eCampus design. Difficulties in course set-up as well as in dissemination of enrollment information were obstacles to achieving full course enrollments during the pilot semester. These issues and the continued evolution of program goals continue to need definition and clarification as the district moves to increase course availability during the next school year.

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