

Course Access: Equitable Opportunities for College and Career Ready Students



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*iNACOL, The International
Association for K-12 Online Learning,
<http://www.inacol.org/>*

The mission of the International Association for K-12 Online Learning (iNACOL) is to ensure all students have access to a world-class education and quality blended and online learning opportunities that prepare them for a lifetime of success. iNACOL is a non-profit organization focused on research; developing policy for student-centered education to ensure equity and access; developing quality standards for emerging learning models using online, blended, and competency-based education; and supporting the ongoing professional development of classroom, school, district and state leaders for new learning models. **Learn more at www.inacol.org.**

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Course Access: Equitable Opportunities for College and Career Ready Students

Definition: What Is Course Access?

Course Access provides public school students with expanded course offerings across learning environments from diverse, accountable providers.¹ It is a mechanism by which students can gain equitable access to a variety of courses in a programmatic effort to increase access, quality and equity in public education.

The Problem: Equity and Access

Imagine a high school student who does not have the opportunity to take all of the courses she needs to get into college. Today, for far too many young people, this is a sobering reality. Public schools around the country may lack the resources, staff, or demand to offer a full catalog of courses. According to recent data from the U.S. Department of Education, many students do not have access to all the courses that will prepare them for college and careers.

- Only 50% of U.S. high schools offer calculus; only 63% offer physics.
- Between 10% and 25% of high schools do not offer more than one of the core courses in the typical sequence of high school math and science education—such as Algebra I and II, geometry, biology, and chemistry.
- Minority students are disproportionately affected: a quarter of high schools with the highest percentage of black and Latino students do not offer Algebra II, and a third of these schools do not offer chemistry.²

The learning opportunities a student has in grades K–12 provide a vital foundation for success in college and career, and these early competencies particularly matter in the STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) fields. According to CODE2040 and the Level Playing Field Institute³, the proportions of high-level black and Latino Silicon Valley tech workers are only 3.4% and 2.4% respectively. This is related to the disproportionately low access that black and Latino students have to the very STEM courses in high school they need as prerequisites to succeed in STEM majors in college. It is not acceptable.

¹ Course Access: An Introduction. Retrieved October 2014 from: <http://www.inacol.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Course-Access-An-Introduction-July-2014.pdf>

² US Department of Education Office for Civil Rights. (March 2014). Civil Rights Data Collection Data Snapshot: College and Career Readiness. Retrieved March 2014 from: <http://ocrdata.ed.gov/Downloads/CRDC-College-and-Career-Readiness-Snapshot.pdf>

³ CODE2040 & Level Playing Field Institute. (January 2014). Infographic: Tech's Big Opportunity Gap. Retrieved 3/24/14 from: http://www.lpfi.org/sites/default/files/code2040_lpfi_final.pdf

A Solution: Course Access

Course Access provides an incredible opportunity to end once and for all the inequitable barriers to college and career-ready coursework. Thanks to Course Access, a student attending a school that does not offer high-level math course work will be able to access the courses he needs to be prepared for and succeed in college through the free, public education system. Course Access courses can be core, advanced, career and technical education courses, credit-bearing internships, online courses, or traditional courses offered in settings outside the school building.⁴

Benefits of Course Access include

- Leveling the playing field and addressing equity and access for all students, including low-income, minority, and rural students.
- Expanding access to college-level courses (e.g., Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, dual enrollment, STEM) and career and technical education opportunities.
- Expanding access to world languages (e.g., Mandarin Chinese).
- Expanding access to high-interest electives or enrichment programming such as accounting or computer programming, and to specialty courses such as environmental science and/or specialized areas (e.g., archeology).
- Providing new options for credit recovery and acceleration.
- Enabling personalized learning pathways.
- Creating and establishing performance-based funding models that reward student growth and proficiency.

Course Access learning pathways are not just for high school students. Students of all ages, K–12, can benefit from opportunities to access online courses and courses outside of their school building.

Course Access provides an opportunity to meet the challenge of ensuring that all students have equitable opportunities to become college and career ready.

A core concept in expanding student learning opportunities is providing a greater variety of academic options and pathways. Course Access initiatives recognize that in the 21st century education may happen at any time, in any place, and at any pace. Potential learning environments surround our students inside and outside of school buildings; therefore, we can think of schools as a hub for expanding personalized learning opportunities and educational services instead of as the sole outpost for accessing learning.⁵

In order for every child to access a world-class education, personalized educational opportunities are more important than ever. As states seek to ensure a high-quality education for every student, increasing access to high-quality courses and programs is possible through expanding access to high-quality teachers and technology-enabled, personalized learning.

In summary, Course Access provides students and families with access to a variety of supplemental online, blended, and face-to-face academic, career, and technical education courses that are fully funded by public education dollars.

⁴ Options might also include learning support services. For example, Louisiana is experimenting with offering online services for students with disabilities (e.g., speech therapy) as part of their course access system.

⁵ de la Fuente, L. TEDx: “*Making School a Game Worth Playing*” text. Retrieved January 2014 from <http://broadeducation.org/tedtalk/text.html>

How Course Access Works for a Student

Students and their parents can choose from a diverse online catalog of courses. Each course must pass the state's quality review process to ensure that it aligns with state academic standards and meets quality standards. Online, face-to-face, and career/technical courses may be available. Additional information may be available for each course and provider, including student reviews and academic performance data. The student meets with her school counselor to determine which courses are appropriate for her learning pathway, and then registers for the course via an online system with the help of the counselor or a parent.

A student might choose to take a course through the Course Access catalog if

- The class is not offered at the student's school.
- The student needs greater personalization or a different pathway to earn credit.
- The student has a personal interest in learning about a specific academic area.
- The student desires greater rigor in a particular subject than is offered at his school.
- The student needs flexibility and more time to go at her own pace.
- The student seeks to accelerate and graduate early.
- The student moves to a school in a new state with different graduation requirements and needs to catch up on core classes.
- The student needs to recover credit to graduate on time.
- The student requires scheduling flexibility for part-time work, an internship, job experiences, or family circumstances.
- The student wants to attain badge or industry certification.

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF A COURSE ACCESS PROGRAM

- The state (or state-approved entity, or a consortium of states with reciprocity agreements) should maintain a web-based catalog of multiple providers and courses that have been approved based on demonstrated alignment to state academic standards, adherence to national quality standards, and course effectiveness data. School districts are encouraged to submit their own courses to the catalog for approval.
- Providers should be paid a portion of each student's per-pupil funding amount for the course based on student outcomes using objective, externally validated proficiency assessments and performance data.
- The state should monitor the quality of providers based on student growth, proficiency, and course satisfaction survey data from verified enrolled students. Providers failing to meet established benchmarks should be removed from course offerings.
- School districts should be required to notify students and their families of the course options available to students.
- The web-based catalog and registration system should be user friendly for students, parents, and school counselors, and should include program-level evaluation metrics (e.g., outcomes of student surveys of verified enrolled students and program performance data).
- School counselors should work with students to ensure they are aware of Course Access options. Courses should be educationally appropriate and tailored to each student's individual learning pathway, and they should lead toward college and career readiness. Students should have the right to enroll in multiple courses from the catalog.
- Students should be able to enroll and complete a course at any time, rather than being bound by the traditional school year schedule. End-of-course assessments should be available at any time to enable this.

In an online course, the student will have frequent one-to-one interaction with the teacher, who will assess the student upon entry and will create a personalized learning pathway. The student will also learn and collaborate with classmates of diverse backgrounds and geographic locations. With support from the teacher to stay on track, the student can progress through the course at her own pace; this approach privileges mastery over seat time.

How Course Access Works in the Public Education System

State Course Access policies expand courses offered via the public education system to students within a state. Course Access initiatives create options for students to register for publicly funded, online, face-to-face, and blended courses beyond the four walls of their own school. A growing number of states are planning, designing, or expressing interest in implementing high-quality Course Access programs because such programs help reach broader goals of ensuring every student has the opportunity to succeed, including graduating with a meaningful diploma and being prepared for college and career success. Eventually, with state reciprocity agreements in place, courses from a single online course catalog could be available to students across multiple states.

How do you know a Course Access policy when you see one? One description comes from Watson et al. (2013): “[S]tudents can choose to take a course from one of multiple providers [and] a district cannot deny a student’s request to enroll in an out-of-district course.” To ensure the funding model is sustainable, ideally, “funding follows the student at the course level.” In addition to access, equity, and a sustainable funding model, quality assurance is an essential element of Course Access. Courses should be reviewed according to nationally recognized quality standards (such as the *iNACOL National Standards for Quality Online Courses*, the *iNACOL National Standards for Quality Online Teaching*, and the *iNACOL National Standards for Quality Online Programs*⁶), and providers should publicly report student academic achievement data for transparency and accountability.⁷ Depending on the policy environment, Course Access will look different from state to state. It is also called by different names across the country. Currently, states with policies meeting some elements of a Course Access policy are Florida, Louisiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Texas, Utah, and Wisconsin. All of these states allow certain or all students in any district to access supplemental courses through a statewide online course clearinghouse, and all provide a funding model to ensure access. Appendix 2 shows the ways in which these policies differ according to a few key metrics. A number of other states have introduced Course Access-type bills in their legislatures.

With more states considering variations of Course Access programs, we encourage states to examine best practices for strategies and quality implementation models.

For more information

If you are interested in speaking with experts and early Course Access implementers regarding topics such as selection rubrics, quality standards, review processes, course provider agreements, and training materials, contact the iNACOL Center for Policy Advocacy and we will help connect you to the appropriate individuals and organizations. To learn more, go to www.inacol.org.

⁶ Available from <http://www.inacol.org/resources/publications/national-quality-standards/>

⁷ See Patrick, S., Edwards, D., Watson, J., and Wicks, M. (2012, October). *Measuring Quality from Inputs to Outcomes: Creating Student Learning Performance Metrics and Quality Assurance for Online Schools*. iNACOL. Available from http://www.inacol.org/cms/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/iNACOL_Quality_Metrics.pdf

Creating High-Quality State Course Access Policies

Course Access holds great potential to improve equity and access, accelerate college and career readiness for all students, and open up new learning models and pathways. Policymakers must take care to ensure that the courses offered are high quality; that a sustainable, equitable funding model exists to ensure access; and that the funding model rewards improving student achievement.

Recommendation: Address Quality and Accountability

Evaluating course quality is a key element of a Course Access initiative. Courses must be reviewed for alignment to academic standards and quality of instructional design and must be evaluated for successful student learning outcomes. For courses delivered online, the *iNACOL National Standards for Quality Online Courses* provides helpful criteria to evaluate online courses on state content standards, structure, and instructional design criteria. Understanding the relationship among evaluating courses, aligning to academic standards, and measuring student outcomes is important in determining effectiveness.

Course Access oversight should include collection and use of key data on outcomes to evaluate program effectiveness. iNACOL has published guidance for policymakers in the report *Measuring Quality From Inputs to Outcomes: Creating Student Learning Performance Metrics and Quality Assurance for Online Schools*. This report suggests using multiple outcomes-based performance indicators to provide transparency and accountability about the effectiveness of online programs and courses, to ensure that only high-quality options are available. Multiple measures of student learning are recommended: performance metrics should collect data on proficiency and growth and evidence of improved student learning outcomes. iNACOL also recommends using valid, independent assessments (where available), such as statewide end-of-course exams. Examining these data for each provider over time throughout a Course Access program can help ensure high-quality course offerings and accountability.

Program evaluations may also consider student and parent satisfaction and student engagement via verified enrolled student, parent, and teacher surveys. Ideally, the Course Access platform would enable transparent reporting of ratings, review, and accountability data, so administrators, parents, and students can view the third-party reviews of each provider and determine which courses will be the best fit for a particular student.

Recommendation: Establish Sustainable, Performance-based Funding Models for Course Access

Sustainable, equitable funding for Course Access is critical. Course Access provides an opportunity to transform seat-time-focused funding models into those that are student-learning performance focused. States should consider adopting weighted, portable, and flexible funding models that are designed to motivate improved student outcomes.

The most sustainable funding model for Course Access is one in which the funding follows the student at the course level. This funding model is sustainable because it is tied to the state's per-pupil funding formula. An appropriation-based funding model may be more politically viable because it avoids potential pushback from local districts, which prefer not to watch limited education funds follow their students to a different provider. However, such a model is not a good long-term solution because it relies on year-after-year support from legislative appropriators. To truly sustain Course Access, education funding should follow the child enrolled in the courses, although a portion of per-pupil funding (10-25%) should stay with local districts to support administration and counseling functions.

Basing a portion of funding on student learning performance and achievement of clear learning goals is a new, innovative model. The primary goal of a performance-based funding model should be to improve student achievement rather than to save money (though cost savings may occur). Funding models should be built on a base amount that is equitable and adequate to meet student needs. The funding model should allow for progression and funding based on demonstrated competency, not seat time. Courses should have clear, explicit, mastery-based learning outcomes, and the funding model should reward providers for student attainment of these outcomes. It is helpful when outcomes can

be validated based on external or independent assessments or on audits of student performance. Funding should flow to the provider based on students' mastery of skills, competencies, and learning goals. Providers should be paid for performance based on demonstrated student success. The funding model should ensure equity and quality through common, externally validated assessments, and with incentives to serve at-risk students and students with disabilities. For example, as students move through a course, they demonstrate mastery through assessments, projects, or tasks, earning credits for their work; as a result, the course provider earns a performance incentive for student competency attainment. One funding model might provide 50% of each student's funding amount upon enrollment and reserve 50% for successful completion as measured via performance assessments. Where available, independent assessments, such as state end-of-course or Advanced Placement exams, could validate performance and assure quality. Additionally, states should consider audit mechanisms to ensure that enrollments are legitimate and that students intend to persist through the course.

Current funding models in states with Course Access are largely completion based and tied to teacher-assigned grades. In these models, a portion of the per-pupil funding is paid on enrollment and the remainder only on course completion. Completion is generally defined and determined by the provider, and not through an external or objective assessment. The per-pupil funding amount follows the student to the course provider, and full funding is provided when a student completes the course. The move to performance-based funding that is supported by quality validations of student performance is critical to ensure equity and quality—not solely based on an assigned grade at the end of a course, which could lead to perverse incentives for grade inflation without an independent assessment providing evidence of performance to validate.

STATE COMPLETION-BASED FUNDING MODEL EXAMPLES

Minnesota

Minnesota allows the student per-pupil funding to be divided per course (or 1/12 full-time equivalent [FTE] for a semester course), with the student's original district retaining 12% for administration fees. Funding flows to the provider when the student successfully completes the course.

Florida

Florida's funding model states that students cannot generate more than one FTE; instead, a student's FTE is distributed proportionally by the Florida Department of Education to each district (Florida Virtual School [FLVS], the state virtual school, is considered a district) for as many courses as a student takes. This includes courses taken across multiple schools districts as well as FLVS. Funding for virtual courses is based on successful course completion.

Utah

Utah's funding model is per course and completion based. Providers receive 50% of the allocated funding per course enrollment and the remaining 50% upon each student's successful completion of each course within the established time frame. Funding follows the student to the provider based on set course fees. Additionally, the model motivates providers to continue to work with students beyond established time frames for completion for the opportunity to receive a reduced final payment of 30%.

Appendix 1 describes essential elements of Course Access legislation for state policymakers.

Conclusion

In working to achieve the goal that all students have access to a world-class education that prepares them for college and careers, Course Access offers a concrete path. Course Access opens up access to high-quality, rigorous coursework for students who lack it at their home school. It enables new, innovative learning environments that can speed up achievement by assessing learning needs and enabling teachers to quickly target learning gaps supported through adaptive technology. It increases access to web-based instruction in which students have more one-to-one support from teachers at any time and in any place. Course Access also provides opportunities for face-to-face learning outside of the school building, including career and technical education that may lead to industry credentials or certificates. Policymakers and educators alike should consider ways to make Course Access work in their state policy context and should adopt the recommendations included in this brief to maximize equity, access, and quality.

Appendix 1: Model Legislative Principles for Course Access Legislation

The following list of model legislative principles is provided as a resource to policymakers and advocates. Policymakers wishing to advance a Course Access policy in their state would do well to include the following essential elements to ensure that equity, funding, and quality are adequately addressed. The model legislative principles are just that—*model*; each state’s context is different and these ideas will need to be adapted to each state’s unique funding and accountability landscape.

Section 1: Purpose of Legislation

The legislation’s purpose is to establish an online course clearinghouse that provides all K–12 students in the state with opportunities to access a variety of high-quality, supplemental, online, blended, and face-to-face academic, career, and technical education courses from multiple approved providers.

Section 2: Access, Equity, and Eligibility

Eligibility

All public school students in the state, grades kindergarten through 12, shall be eligible to participate in the program. Should the program initially lack the capacity to provide offerings aligned to academic standards for all grades or learning progressions, the state may pilot an initial period of a shorter grade span or smaller population of students until the full capacity has been achieved (i.e., promoting K–12 eligibility for Course Access, focusing first on high school-level courses, and addressing K–7 opportunities for gifted students, remedial services, performing arts and other distinct and logistically feasible targeted uses).

Equity

All providers must comply with applicable federal and state disability laws. No student shall be denied access to any course based on learning needs, and all course materials and instruction shall be accessible for persons of all abilities, consistent with Federal 508 requirements. Materials and instruction should be designed consistent with the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL).

Access

No district shall be allowed to deny a student’s request to enroll in the state’s Course Access program without a legitimate, educational reason. The state shall put in place and clearly communicate a process through which parents may appeal a district’s decision to deny student enrollment in a Course Access course.

The state shall put in place a priority system for students based on need (course not available at students’ school, student’s school rated under-performing, course credit needed for graduation, part of student’s IEP) to target courses for those students most in need.

Any Time, Any Place

Learning opportunities available through the Course Access program shall allow for students to demonstrate mastery when ready. Students shall have the option to take courses outside of the traditional school year.

Section 3: Funding

Adequate and Equitable Funding

Funding per course shall adequately cover the cost of delivering high-quality content and instruction that meet the state’s quality assurance standards. Base funding shall be equitable for both districts and providers—it shall not exceed the relative percentage of a full course load (for example, one sixth of the per-pupil allocation per course when students take six courses per semester), but nor shall the base funding amount exceed the per-course adequate amount established by the state specific to online courses. Base funding amounts should include weights for special populations that reflect the actual cost of meeting the needs of students in such subgroups in an online environment as determined by a professional judgment process. Alternatively, course costs may be determined by the provider within funding parameters to incorporate cost savings or enable different pathways (e.g., career/technical courses that require costly materials) where appropriate. The student’s home school may retain a portion (e.g., 10-25%) of the student’s funding for the course to cover a relative share of costs for services such as assessments, counseling, custodial, and administrative functions.

Sustainable Funding

Funding for the Course Access program should be sustainable. The state’s funding formula shall allow a portion of per-pupil funding to follow each student to each course provider, whether via the state or the student’s district. In states where the funding model does not allow funding to follow the student, the legislature will need to identify a different sustainable and adequate funding source for the Course Access program.

Performance-based Funding

The funding model should tie a portion of funding for courses to student outcomes, with the goal of improving student achievement. Outcomes should be determined by objective, valid, performance measures, rather than subjective, completion-based measures such as student grades. The model should allow for progression and funding based on demonstrated competency, not seat time.

Section 4: Quality Assurance

Use of Quality Standards

The state shall establish a review process for approving courses for inclusion in the course catalog. The review process shall incorporate nationally recognized standards of quality for online courses, such as *iNACOL National Standards for Quality Online Courses*. Providers wishing to include online teacher-led courses in the catalog must demonstrate adherence to nationally recognized teaching standards for online learning, such as *iNACOL National Standards for Quality Online Teaching*. Whether conducted directly by the SEA or by external reviewers, the review process shall be adequately supported in a sustainable, ongoing manner to ensure quality standards are maintained. The state may also consider entering into a reciprocity agreement with other Course Access states to recognize provider approvals (in such cases, providers should be evaluated not only on standards alignment and curriculum quality, but also on student growth and proficiency data from other states).

Use of Outcome Data on Student Learning

Course providers shall use valid, reliable, and objective assessments of student learning to gather data on student proficiency on statewide, common end-of-course exams, performance tasks and individual student growth showing performance along a trajectory. Providers shall use progress monitoring and formative assessment data in real time to inform instruction. Providers shall provide transparent reporting and shall share proficiency and individual student

growth data, disaggregated by subgroup⁸ (race, ethnicity, poverty, disability, English language learner), on an ongoing basis through a process established by the SEA, with the Course Access program and with the student's home school. Timely, objective evaluation of provider effectiveness will help to identify and address quality assurance issues early on. The SEA shall establish policies and procedures to make course and provider-level data publicly available on the state's online course catalog, updated at least twice annually, so that students and parents can make informed decisions when choosing a course provider. Additionally, student satisfaction survey data and qualitative feedback for each course shall be collected upon student course completion, and they shall be publicly shared for providers on the state's online course catalog. The SEA shall establish student outcomes via performance metrics and criteria for program effectiveness based in significant part on

- a. proficiency, individual student growth, and independent student end-of-course evaluations OR
- b. equivalent or more-effective measures, to determine provider effectiveness and eligibility for participation on a periodic basis.⁹

Provider Accountability

The initial authorization of the course provider shall be for a limited initial period (e.g., three years). After the second year of the initial authorization period, the state (or an entity designated by the state) shall conduct a thorough review of the course provider's activities and its students' academic performance in accordance with the school and district accountability system. If the students' performance does not meet state performance standards, the state board shall place the course provider on probation. Probation would require immediate remediation by the course provider. If the provider did not meet performance standards at the end of the probationary period, its participation in Course Access would be terminated. The SEA (or its designated entity) should reserve the right to conduct a performance review of course providers at any time and for any reason, which review could also result in probation or termination if justified by quality or outcomes.

At the end of the initial authorization period, the state may reauthorize the course provider for additional periods (e.g., 3–5 years) after thorough review of the course provider's activities and the achievement of students enrolled in its courses.

Reauthorization and sustained participation in the program relative to student performance will be based on positive gains on student proficiency and growth and on course evaluations.

Section 5: Communications with Students, Families, and Teachers

The SEA or its designated entity shall regularly and proactively communicate to students and their families the availability of opportunities in the Course Access program. If the responsibility for student and family notification falls to LEAs, the SEA shall assure compliance with this provision. For example, the SEA might require LEAs to include the state Course Access catalog in, or clearly linked from, the LEA's course catalog.

The course catalog, anonymized performance data, and student satisfaction data should be made publicly available in a machine-readable format to enable aggregation and analysis by third parties such as school information and ratings websites. State leaders or a designated entity should clearly communicate to teachers, principals, school support staff, and district leaders Course Access's benefits for students. Communications should emphasize it as a strategy to achieve equity and increase access to college and career ready coursework for all students, regardless of background or geography.

⁸ To the extent that group sizes (n sizes) protect individual student privacy.

⁹ See Patrick, S., Edwards, D., Watson, J., and Wicks, M. (2012, October). *Measuring Quality from Inputs to Outcomes: Creating Student Learning Performance Metrics and Quality Assurance for Online Schools*. iNACOL. Available from http://www.inacol.org/cms/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/iNACOL_Quality_Metrics.pdf

Implementation Considerations

Every state will have its own opportunities and challenges in crafting Course Access legislation that fits its own funding formula, accountability provisions, review cycles, and data and assessment systems. However, any Course Access legislation should be in the best interests of students, with robust provisions to ensure only high-quality courses are available from providers that adhere to nationally recognized quality standards, and with transparency for student learning outcomes.

States implementing Course Access may lack the capacity to manage the ongoing quality assurance process—from reviewing courses for adherence to nationally-recognized quality standards to evaluating student outcomes and provider performance; from communicating with schools and parents to providing academic counseling support. While it is important for the SEA to establish objective, common processes and measures, it may consider designating an objective third party through a grant, contract, or memorandum of understanding to manage program implementation.

Even the most carefully thought-out law does not always result in consistent outcomes. States implementing Course Access policies should ensure that procedures are in place to make families and students aware of their options under the program and that the enrollment process is easily understandable and accessible. New Course Access states can also benefit from the experience of states with existing policies, including provider evaluation rubrics, negotiated course provider agreements, and training materials. As more states adopt Course Access policies they may consider sharing technology platforms, providers, common application processes, and courses through reciprocity agreements. Although many states are experienced in running state online schools, their role will shift as they begin to oversee a portfolio of providers. States currently implementing Course Access policies should share with states adopting new legislation the lessons they have learned.

One key lesson learned in Louisiana was the importance of the counseling program set up to provide technical assistance to school counselors, students, and parents. Course Access program counselors work with school counselors to make them aware of the program and course options, and to ensure that courses selected by students and families are educationally appropriate, logistically feasible, and keep the student on track to an on-time graduation.

To ensure the primary goals of equity and college and career readiness, states should focus initial rounds of course requests for proposals (RFPs) on priority subjects and services. For example, it should be a priority to ensure that the full range of high school math and science courses is available in the catalog. There should also be a system in place to ensure that students with the highest need (e.g., students attending low-performing schools and students in subgroups with the lowest college-going and persistence rates) receive priority to register for Course Access.

Other issues that must be addressed to ensure the success of a Course Access initiative include good governance of the privacy, security, and use of student data by course providers. Also, the state should have a plan in place to ensure that any student who wishes to register for a Course Access course has access to the requisite devices and connectivity at school, at home, or in the community to succeed.

Appendix 2: Comparison of State Course Access Policies

State	Policy Name	Funding Model	Provider Approval Criteria Consistent with <i>iNACOL National Standards for Quality Online Courses</i>	Providers Must Publicly Report Student Achievement Outcome Metrics
Florida	District School Choice Program	Funding follows the student	Yes	No
Louisiana	Supplemental Course Academy	Appropriation	Yes	Yes
Michigan	Statewide Online Course Catalog	Funding follows the student	Yes	No
Minnesota	Enrollment Alternatives	Funding follows the student	No	No
Texas	Texas Virtual School Network	Funding follows the student	Yes	Yes
Utah	Statewide Online Education Program	Funding follows the student	No	Yes
Wisconsin	Course Options	Funding follows the student	No ¹⁰	No

¹⁰ While not required in statute or regulation, the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction and the Wisconsin Digital Learning Collaborative have signed a MOU which indicates that only providers meeting *iNACOL National Standards for Quality Online Courses* will be approved for the Course Options program.

Appendix 3: Authorizing State Legislation and Guidance

Florida

Florida Department of Education, Legislation and Laws That Impact Virtual Education (see House Bill 7029)
<http://www.fldoe.org/schools/virtual-schools/LegLawsVirtEdu.asp>

Florida Department of Education Virtual Education information page <http://www.fldoe.org/schools/virtual-schools/>

Louisiana

Louisiana Enabling Legislation for Course Choice (Act 2/HB 976 in 2012 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature)
<http://www.legis.state.la.us/billdata/byinst.asp?sessionid=12RS&billtype=ACT&billno=2>

Bulletin 132: Louisiana Course Choice Program <http://bese.louisiana.gov/documents-resources/policies-bulletins>

Bulletin 741: Louisiana Handbook for School Administrators <http://bese.louisiana.gov/documents-resources/policies-bulletins>

Michigan

Section 21f of the State School Aid Act (MCL 388.1621f) <http://legislature.mi.gov/doc.aspx?mcl-388-1621f>

Department of Education Guidance and FAQ http://michigan.gov/documents/mde/5OD__EXPANDED_ONLINE_LEARNING_430347_7.pdf

Michigan Virtual University FAQ http://www.mivu.org/Portals/0/21F%20FAQ%20dec13_rev.pdf

21f Toolkit, including detailed guidance and sample letters for schools and districts, counselor checklists, and online learner readiness tools https://micourses.org/resources/21f_Tool_Kit.html

Minnesota

Minnesota Statute 124D.095 Online Learning Option <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=124d.095>

Minnesota Department of Education FAQ <http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/StuSuc/EnrollChoice/Online/052530>

Texas

Texas HB 1926, an act relating to the operation of the state virtual school network and courses provided through other distance learning arrangements <http://www.legis.state.tx.us/tlodocs/83R/fiscalNotes/html/HB01926S.HTM>

Texas Education Code, Title 2, Subtitle F, Chapter 30A, State Virtual School Network <http://www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/Docs/ED/htm/ED.30A.htm>

TxVSN FAQ <http://www.txvsn.org/portal/AboutUs/FAQ.aspx>

Utah

Statewide Online Education Program (SOEP), S.B. 65 (2011) <http://le.utah.gov/~2011/bills/sbillint/sb0065.htm>

Utah State Board of Education Regulations (R277-726) <http://www.rules.utah.gov/publicat/code/r277/r277-726.htm>

Utah State Office of Education Frequently Asked Questions (March 2013). <http://schools.utah.gov/edonline/Home/Students-and-Parents-FAQ-03-21-13.aspx>

Wisconsin

Student Course Options program webpage with guidance for students, families, schools, and non-profits
<http://courseoptions.dpi.wi.gov/>

Authorizing Statute, Section 118.52 <http://docs.legis.wi.gov/statutes/statutes/118/52?view=section>

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