



## Best Practice Tips from LEGs

WVS has been monitoring a number of districts the past three years that consistently have completion rates above WVS's and national averages. When asked about their successful strategies and challenges supporting students, they had much to offer. ☺

### 1. What position or title do these LEGs have in their school districts?

School-to-Work Coordinator, Youth Apprenticeship Coordinator, Virtual High School Coordinator, Guidance Counselor, Alternative Education Coordinator, Distance Learning Lab LEG, Learning Options Coordinator

### 2. Average number of years they have been a LEG:

- a. 2-3 years – 22%
- b. 3-4 years – 33%
- c. More than 4 years 44%

### 3. How much time do these LEGs spend weekly supporting and monitoring students?

- a. 1-2 hours – 11%
- b. 2-3 hours – 33%
- c. 4 or more hours – 57%

### 4. How much time supporting and monitoring do they estimate they spend per student per week?

- a. 5-10 minutes - 11%
- b. 10-20 minutes – 33%
- c. 20-30 minutes – 33%
- d. More than 30 minutes per student per week – 22%

### 5. What are the most successful strategies they use to keep students motivated to complete their courses?

- a. "When I sit down with each student and go through their course introduction with them, I have a printed timeline of what they will need to do to complete their course on time. I check their progress at least twice a week to see if they are keeping up with their schedule. If they are not, I speak personally with the student, e-mail them, or call them, to let them know they are falling behind. This usually gets them motivated to get back on track."
- b. "I start by making sure that they are all aware of expectations, potential costs, and important deadlines associated with their course. I mail this information home to parents before the course begins and I present it to all on-line students in a group meeting prior to the start of the course. I use the automatic reports regularly to check student progress and I meet with students who are falling behind. I also call or e-mail parents if I am really concerned about a student's progress."
- c. "Most students that are doing online learning, it fits their needs and if they want to be able to do more courses and explore they must complete one course at a time."
- d. "Constant communication with the student and their parents."
- e. "Detailed contracts, pace charts. Very frequent communication."
- f. "I am in here everyday, every hour with them to help keep them on track and encourage them to communicate with their online teacher often."

- g. "Individual meetings, e-mail reminders."
  - h. "Contact, contact, contact with students, parents, course teachers and the good folks at Aventa, WVS, our local consortium, faculty friends helping out, my fellow counselors, etc."
  - i. "Rigorous selection process for enrichment students SMART Goal Contracts at the beginning of each term and reevaluation at mid-term and two weeks before the end of the term I receive every email from the teacher the student receives. Weekly printout of grades on Friday from each student. Monday is spent with individual students looking at progress & how I can help be more successful."
- 6. What are your top three challenges you face supporting online students in your district?**
- a. "Paper-work includes registration, online teachers who don't get back to students with their questions on a timely basis, administrative accountability expectations to hit 90% + success rate."
  - b. "Teaching time management, technical issues, time management and technical issues."
  - c. "Time, number of students, technical questions."
  - d. "We have great support for online learners; the biggest problem is keeping them in the online class and not somewhere else on the web. I also have difficulty getting them to complete or really understand the tutorial; they like to jump right in no matter what they are told."
  - e. "Determining validity of student excuses for lack of progress."
  - f. "Students working from home-not being in the building to see what they are seeing, Technology issues, and not enough time to support them."
  - g. "Getting them in the routine, getting them to communicate with the teachers, and getting them to get organized as the class is, sometimes they are not."
  - h. "Time, accessibility to the student, knowledge of the course. I learn more about the courses that we provide every year but there are still questions that come up that I can't answer."
  - i. "Students' lack of inherent motivation. Time. Did I mention time?"
- 7. Do you use any tools to evaluate student readiness or have district/school guidelines for who can take courses?**
- a. "We don't have specific tools, but before a student is allowed to take a course, I meet with the student's counselor and a high school administrator to evaluate the student's academic record, discipline record, personal circumstances, need for credits, and desire for online coursework. Most students are approved for courses regardless of the aforementioned items, but occasionally, we require students to find success in other areas before we allow them to begin a course."
  - b. "I meet with all the on-line students before the course starts to give them detailed information and expectations. Every student has an opportunity to try an on-line course; I find that some students drop out after the initial meeting."
  - c. "No, but there is typically a conversation with student and parents about the expectations of taking an online class."
  - d. "Students must be pre-approved by administration. Each case is taken individually based on the students circumstances."
  - e. "Students must be pre-approved by administration. Each case is taken individually based on the students circumstances."
  - f. "We do not use a readiness tool at this time. Students on-campus are not allowed to take a course online that is offered on-campus. Exceptions do exist."
  - g. "The guidance counselor selects the students who will take online classes."
  - h. "Online readiness survey provided in course guide."

- i. "Because I am the counselor for half of my students (by alphabet) and my partner is readily available I have used personal knowledge and individual conferences to screen."

**8. Does their school/district have any online policies that they feel are helpful and contribute to student success?**

- a. "LEG expectations. Enrichment courses are paid for by student if they fail the class. High expectations of students who choose this type of learning are reflected in the selection process."
- b. "We provide a LEG for all online students."
- c. "A clear and strong contract."
- d. "If they fail a course they must pay the district back. Money talks!"
- e. "We have a policy and a Virtual High School Student Contract that must be signed and returned."
- f. "We have policies that have been approved by our school board that students and their parent(s)/guardian(s) must sign. The policies primarily address online safety and ethical use of materials, but also address future online courses (students may not take additional online courses at the district's expense unless they have successfully completed prior courses, or paid the district back for any unsuccessful courses)."

**\*\*\*\*The nine districts studied have had completion rates between 70-100% over the past three years for an average of 77% for over 1000 courses. The average grade for all their students has been 86%.**