

Fast Facts

Course Access: Powering New Possibilities for South Carolina Students

Unleash More Options

Whether a district is large or small, whether a child has a learning disability or not, whether a student is an auditory, visual or kinesthetic learner, and whether a school is thriving or struggling, a concept known as Course Access provides customized learning opportunities to empower today's students and tomorrow's leaders.

Course Access is a cost-effective tool that harnesses technology to offer students access to high-quality, customized education. By making location irrelevant, Course Access virtual classes could be the most powerful tool lawmakers can use to *immediately* address inequity issues raised in the *Abbeville* ruling.

Access and Opportunity

How can Course Access help students in so many different situations? By harnessing the power of technology to provide students with a menu of additional courses from a wide variety of providers to supplement those offered at their local school. Students are able to choose formats that best enable them to learn, whether online, face-to-face or a blend of both. *Course Access has the power to connect students to the education resources they need, no matter what school district they live in.*

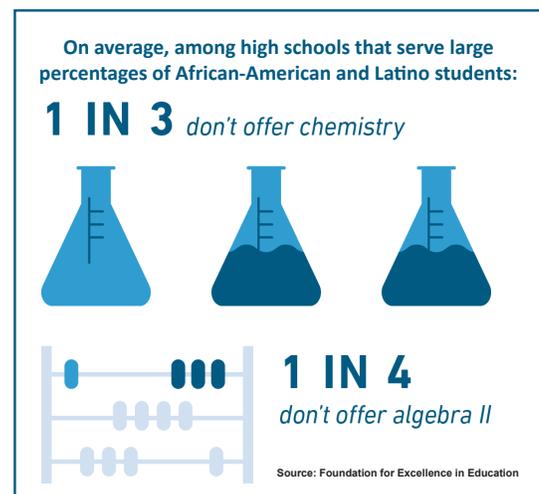
Seven Keys to Course Access Success

1. Rigorous state review of prospective providers and courses.
2. Strong systems to monitor student achievement.
3. Flexible and sustainable funding models.
4. Alignment with existing state education standards.
5. Sustained engagement with districts and schools.
6. Effective communication with students and parents.
7. Clearly defined student eligibility.

Source: Foundation for Excellence in Education

Why is Course Access Needed?

Equity for Students – Course Access would dramatically expand the number of courses available to South Carolina students, regardless of their location. The benefits of Course Access in rural counties may be different than the benefits seen in urban districts. A rural school district may use Course Access to provide college preparatory classes that are difficult to teach and expensive for them to maintain. For example, one district



in Texas partnered with Rosetta Stone to offer foreign languages that they couldn't have otherwise. More populated districts may see an increase in students taking fine arts courses or seeking credit in AP classes. In either case, *students win.*

Cost Effective – Instead of funding massive overhead costs, Course Access allocates precious resources directly to student learning, allowing them to take advantage of a wide range of the best instruction from public and private providers around South Carolina and beyond. States can even partner together to minimize costs with reciprocity agreements that recognize courses approved by other states.

Expands the Teaching Pool – With South Carolina facing a growing teacher shortage, especially in rural districts, Course Access provides one common-sense solution to address this mounting challenge.

Successful Beginnings

With demand growing for VirtualSC and online charter schools, South Carolina has begun to unleash the power of online learning. But we have only scratched the surface of what is possible. Louisiana implemented robust Course Access legislation in 2013 with incredible results. For the 2014-2015 school year, nearly **19,000** courses were enrolled, a **700%** increase over the year before. Texas, Michigan, Florida, Utah have also enacted successful and growing Course Access programs.