

Online and Blended Learning Programs in K–12 Educational Organizations Using Stride Curriculum and Teachers



Stride
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Partnerships between Stride and program-level teachers and support staff leads to student success

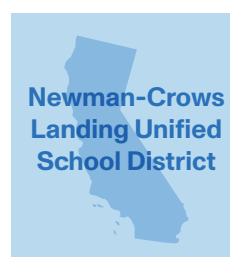
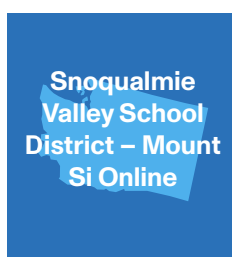
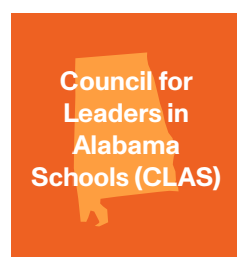
Evergreen Education Group completed case studies of five K–12 education organizations, from schools to a state association, that were using Stride Learning Solutions online curriculum and Stride teachers as the foundation of their online and blended learning programs. The goal of these case studies was to examine and document these programs to describe how they function and highlight resulting positive impacts and successes. A high-level summary of these case studies follows.

Programs differed in type of organization, audiences served, size, demographics, and instructional focus. The number of students served by each program ranged widely from under 50 to over 75,000. All programs were robust and relatively mature programs; each had approximately ten years of history.

Two of the programs were statewide in scope. One was a state education association offering a supplemental adaptive learning system to all K–12 schools in the state, and the other was a university lab school that provides a full-time online kindergarten through twelfth grade education directly to students throughout the state.

Two were school district-level programs. One was a rural district-level virtual school that provides an array of online and blended options, including full-time online K–12 education and various supplemental online and blended courses. The other program was a credit recovery program in a small district.

One program was a blended learning program in a private special education school, in which Stride teachers provided core academic instruction, while the school's teachers work face-to-face with students on social and emotional well-being.



STATEWIDE-LEVEL

Council for Leaders in Alabama Schools (CLAS)



ALABAMA
STARTED 2006
SCHOOLS SERVED 179
GRADES K-12
STUDENTS 77,780
FRL 72%

State education association, in partnership with the Alabama State Department of Education, provides supplemental adaptive digital learning instruction to K-12 schools across Alabama. CLAS provides support to schools through its grant-funded academic specialists.

STATEWIDE-LEVEL

Southern University Laboratory Virtual School (SULVS)



LOUISIANA
STARTED 2012
GRADES K-12
STUDENTS 345
FRL 25%

Statewide virtual public school, based in Southern University's laboratory school, offers a full-time online education directly to K-12 students located across the state of Louisiana. The sole requirement for students to attend SULVS is to be a Louisiana resident and have a 2.0 GPA.

DISTRICT-LEVEL SCHOOL

Snoqualmie Valley School District – Mount Si Online



WASHINGTON
STARTED 2012
SCHOOLS SERVED 11
GRADES Pre-K-12
STUDENTS 175
FRL 8.9%

Districtwide online learning school offers a range of full-time online, blended learning, and supplemental online options to district students, including original credit, credit enhancement, credit recovery, and Washington's Alternative Learning Experience (ALE) program.

DISTRICT-LEVEL PROGRAM

Newman-Crows Landing Unified School District



CALIFORNIA
STARTED 2016
SCHOOLS SERVED 2
GRADES 9-12
STUDENTS 141
FRL 66%

Small district credit recovery program uses online credit recovery curriculum and online teachers to increase graduation rates and keep kids in school. Students work on courses in dedicated credit recovery study halls staffed with teachers and support staff.

SCHOOL

Watson Institute Social Center for Academic Achievement (WISCA)



PENNSYLVANIA
STARTED 2010
SCHOOLS SERVED 1
GRADES K-12
STUDENTS 46

Private special education school incorporates a flexible blended learning model utilizing online teacher-led curriculum to teach core courses at digital learning stations, while in-school face-to-face teachers focus on meeting the unique social and emotional needs of students.

Teachers and Support Staff are the Backbone of Success

Four of the five programs utilized Stride Learning Solutions curriculum with Stride teachers as the primary online teaching staff. The fifth program does not use a system that incorporates a teacher-led model. Complementing teachers, an integral component of all programs was an array of support people from both Stride and local programs in a variety of roles, including mentors, advisors, coaches, program coordinators, and technical and administrative resources.

While the scope and focus of programs varied widely, the most common similarity was that Stride teachers teach most or all courses, host live synchronous video class sessions, maintain constant communication with students and families, and work in close collaboration with local program teachers and staffs. Across all programs it was evident to Evergreen's researchers that a strong and valued partnership exists between the Stride and school program staffs.

Council for Leaders in Alabama Schools (CLAS)

Stride Skills Arcade

State association providing online supplemental adaptive learning instruction

Stride	State	District	School
Students interact directly with the system, without facilitation by an online teacher.	State CLAS coordinator and CLAS Academic Specialists provide coordination and support to schools.	N/A	A facilitator in each school provides support. Teachers in each school work directly with students.

Southern University Laboratory Virtual School (SULVS)

Stride Learning Solutions
Online Curriculum

Statewide full-time online K-12 school based in university

Stride	State	District	School
Stride teachers teach online courses, directly communicating with students. Stride Mentors add a layer of advising and coaching support.	The state program staff coordinates the program while closely collaborating with Stride	N/A	N/A

Snoqualmie Valley School District – Mount Si Online

Stride Learning Solutions
Online Curriculum

Districtwide virtual school

Stride	State	District	School
Stride teachers teach online courses, constantly communicating with students directly.	N/A	The district online learning coordinator is a second point of contact for students	N/A

Newman-Crows Landing Unified School District (NCLUD)

Stride Learning Solutions
Credit Recovery

Credit recovery program

Stride	State	District	School
Stride teachers teach online credit recovery courses, directly communicating with students.	N/A	N/A	Study hall teachers and Learning Directors support and guide students.

Watson Institute Social Center for Academic Achievement (WISCA)

Stride Learning Solutions
Online Curriculum

Private K-12 special education blended learning school

Stride	State	District	School
Stride teachers teach academic core courses in a blended format, communicating with and supporting students.	N/A	N/A	WISCA's teachers and staff focus attention on meeting the unique social and emotional needs of students.

How Students Learn

The ways students learn varied primarily based on the instructional model employed. What did students do, and where and when did they do it?

Learning activities typically included daily pre-scheduled live video class sessions with Stride teachers, independent online Stride Learning Solutions lessons, offline assignments, working on experiments, communicating with teachers and advisors, and even attending online and offline clubs. Some students had a more flexible schedule with no pre-determined live class sessions.

Students studied online at home, in a school, or a combination of both. When in school buildings, students usually studied in a digital learning lab, taking one or two online classes for supplemental original credit or credit recovery, for example.





A typical day's schedule not only varied among programs, but individual student schedules within a single program could vary as well. Typically, students in lower grades had a more structured day, while upper classman most often had more control over their own schedules on a flexible basis.

The following tables summarize how students learn by program.

Council for Leaders in Alabama Schools (CLAS)

State association providing online supplemental adaptive learning instruction

STRIDE SKILLS ARCADE

	<p>Students use Stride Skills Arcade in school classrooms or digital learning labs.</p>		<p>Some students also work at home , typically for extra practice.</p>
	<p>At least 15 minutes daily</p>		<p>Before and after school, weekends, and summer break</p>

Southern University Laboratory Virtual School (SULVS)

Statewide full-time online K-12 school based in university





STRIDE LEARNING SOLUTIONS ONLINE CURRICULUM

	<p>Students need only enter a facility to take state tests at pre-determined, proctored testing sites</p>		<p>Students work independently at home attending daily live teacher-led video classes, completing online lessons independently, and working on offline activities. Students must also communicate with their Stride teachers or mentors at least once a week.</p>
			<p>Several daily live video sessions 30-60 minutes each, plus flexible time for lessons, averaging 2-4 hours.</p>

Snoqualmie Valley School District – Mount Si Online

Districtwide virtual school





STRIDE LEARNING SOLUTIONS ONLINE

	<p>Supplemental credit enhancement and credit recovery students work on their online class in the digital learning lab.</p>		<p>Full-time online students complete courses at home and are required to connect with their Stride online teachers at least once a week.</p> <p>A few school-based blended learning students opt to take some of their online course(s) at home before or after school.</p>
	<p>One or two designated online class periods during the day.</p>		<p>Self-paced flexible schedule. Students must connect with their Stride teachers once a week.</p>

Newman-Crows Landing Unified School District (NCLUSD)

Credit recovery program





STRIDE LEARNING SOLUTIONS ONLINE CREDIT RECOVERY CURRICULUM

	<p>Students take credit recovery courses in dedicated credit recovery study halls located in each of the district’s two high schools. A teacher and a credit recovery Learning Director staff study halls providing direct support to students.</p>		<p>A few students access some or all their credit recovery courses from home or other locations.</p>
	<p>Two 90-minute lab sessions each week</p>		<p>Before or after school and over the summer</p>

Watson Institute Social Center for Academic Achievement (WISCA)

Private special education K–12 blended learning school

STRIDE LEARNING SOLUTIONS ONLINE CURRICULUM

	<p>Station rotation blended learning model, rotating 4 to 5 times daily. At computer stations, students work on Stride online curriculum in private digital learning cubicles. When face-to-face with in-school teachers the focus is on social and emotional issues as well as academics.</p>		
	<p>Each rotation includes 20–40 minutes on Stride courses and 20–30 minutes with face-to-face teachers.</p>		

Success Measured in Many Ways

The five online and blended learning programs measured success in different ways. While all considered traditional metrics, such as graduation rates and test data, the predominant focus was on more qualitative success measures. Two areas stood out that typified success for these programs. First, was the positive impact produced by the cohesive teams of Stride teachers and local teachers at the program level, complemented by a rich fabric of support people. Second was how well programs met the needs of underserved and hard to reach niches to provide options not feasible or unavailable in brick-and-mortar school settings.

Common among success factors for all programs, and one of the most impressive, was how significantly the partnership between Stride and program-level teachers and support staff contributed to the well-being and success of students. It was clear that these teaching teams had established strong and productive relationships with students and families. One school said that without the strong partnership between Stride teachers and their teachers, they would not have been able to provide the level of personalized attention that each of their special education students needed. A state organization said that their academic support specialists have been the key to student success.

While most programs served a wide variety of needs, several measured their successes in reaching underserved and hard to reach student populations. One state level full-time online school achieved great success in meeting the educational and social and emotional needs of many underserved children throughout an entire state. A geographically diverse school district was able to provide innovative offerings to both underperforming and accelerated children.

Stride Learning Solutions courses and Stride teachers, complemented by in-school teachers and mentors, were the foundation for all credit recovery programs studied. Schools believed this model was a key factor in student success. One rural school district noted that they had four straight years of graduating 100% of seniors, and the percent of A-G students qualifying to enter the State of California system more than tripled in the same period.

Students reported that the flexible learning model is empowering, and they appreciate how online learning can free up time during their daily schedules. Many students felt that this flexibility was one of the major reasons for their success. A dedicated special education school said that hands down, the ability for teachers to adjust pace for students is the most positive impact from their partnership with Stride.

In summary, all programs studied produced considerable improvements across a range of measurement methodologies. While programs were very different in their scope and focus, a common contributing factor to success was the combination of the Stride Learning Solutions curriculum and Stride teachers. This, coupled with the teachers and staffs within the program organizations and schools, resulted in a formula for success.

Common among success factors for all programs, and one of the most impressive, was how significantly the partnership between Stride and program-level teachers and support staff contributed to the well-being and success of students. It was clear that these teaching teams had established strong and productive relationships with students and families. One school said that without the strong partnership between Stride teachers and their teachers, they would not have been able to provide the level of personalized attention that each of their special education students needed.

Council for Leaders in Alabama Schools

Montgomery, Alabama

State education association offers powerful supplemental adaptive digital learning instruction to K–12 schools across Alabama, supported by grant-funded specialists and in-school facilitators

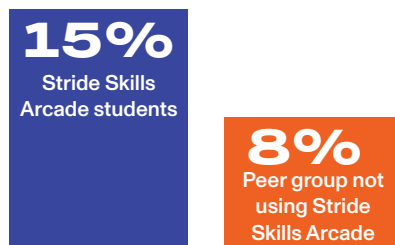
Beginning in 2006, through a partnership with the Alabama State Department of Education and Stride Learning Solutions, and funded by the CLAS Motivated Data Grant, CLAS began offering Stride Skills Arcade, an online supplemental adaptive learning system, to K–12 schools statewide at no cost to schools. CLAS selected the Stride Skills Arcade because of its adaptive learning capabilities and the ability for teachers to customize instructional content and delivery for each student based on their needs and performance.

The grant also provides funds to support the program with part-time CLAS Academic Specialists to support schools. Gina Price, CLAS State Coordinator, shared, “Because of the way CLAS has partnered with the Alabama Department of Education, this program is free to all Alabama schools, which administrators appreciate very much, given the competing needs for their professional development budgets.”

Schools must apply for the use of Stride Skills Arcade and agree to work cooperatively with the CLAS Academic Specialist assigned to their school. The CLAS Academic specialists are typically retired administrators or teachers dedicated to supporting the educators and students in the schools they serve. Fifteen CLAS academic specialists support approximately 7 to 15 schools each within a geographic region. They provide teacher training, ongoing support, and make quarterly visits to schools.

To provide first-hand support at the local school level, each school designates someone in the school to serve as the school’s facilitator. This is often a teacher, an academic coach, or sometimes a media specialist. After initial training, academic specialists provide ongoing support and guidance, and they visit schools at least quarterly to provide support and connect with school facilitators.

Math benchmark pass rate improvement was nearly twice that of peers not using Stride Skills Arcade



STATE ASSOCIATION

Type of school:

State-level online K–12 supplemental program

Schools served:

118 Elementary schools

37 Middle schools

24 High schools

Grades served:

Pre–K through 12

Program started:

2006

Students served by program:

77,780

Free/Reduced-price lunch:

72%

Staff:

1 State Coordinator

15 Academic specialists

1 Facilitator in each school

Instructional model:

Supplemental online instruction

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

CLAS is Alabama's premier school leader organization, providing professional learning, curriculum support, and other services to schools.

Through a partnership with the Alabama State Department of Education and Stride Learning Solutions, CLAS offers the Stride Skills Arcade adaptive learning system to K–12 schools across Alabama.

Stride Skills Arcade is an award-winning game-based adaptive learning system for grades Pre-K through 8 to accelerate learning in math, language arts, reading and science.

The Stride Skills Arcade offering is funded by a CLAS grant, the Motivated Data Grant, and is available to Alabama schools at no cost.

Support for schools is provided by grant-funded CLAS academic specialists as well as school-based facilitators assigned within each school.

An independent university-based study found that Stride Skills Arcade students overall improved math benchmark pass rates by 15% compared to their demographically matched peers who improved pass rate by 8%. The same study found Stride Skills Arcade students overall improved reading benchmark pass rates by 10%.

Adaptive Learning Instructional Model

CLAS offers Stride Skills Arcade to schools across Alabama, from kindergarten through the twelfth grade. As shown in the table below, subject area focus varies for different grade levels. Stride Skills Arcade is typically used in grades K–2 for reading, math, and language arts. In addition to reading, language arts, and math, some schools also choose to incorporate science for grades 3 through 8. At the high school level, it is most often used by special education students or those students who may need specific academic remediation.

Stride Skills Arcade subject area focus

Grade Levels	Subject area content primarily used
K–2	Reading, Language Arts, and Math
3–8	Reading, Language Arts, Math, and Science
9–12	Algebra II, Geometry, English I, English II, English III, U.S. History, and Biology

Students use Stride Skills Arcade before, during, and after their regular schedule. They access the system in school classrooms, at learning stations, centers within classrooms, computer labs, as well as at home. CLAS provides Stride Skills Arcade to a wide range of students, including medically homebound, special education, special needs, Response to Intervention (RTI), and students engaged in continuity of learning over summer and winter breaks. Some students also use the system at home to practice and reinforce academic skills.

Stride Skills Arcade is designed to enhance learning, while incorporating games and rewards to motivate students. Its adaptive technology presents concepts students still need to master at the grade level most appropriate at the time.

Stride Skills Arcade includes an academic as well as a gaming portion. The academic portion begins on grade level for a student and makes adaptive adjustments based on skill performance. If students struggle with on grade level skills, the system first remediates one grade level below. If students continue to struggle, Stride Skills Arcade will remediate to another grade level in specific skill areas. Based on student performance, remediation will move a student up or down as much as two grade levels. When students answer incorrectly, they are given a rationale for why their answer was incorrect.

Students collect coins for correct answers, two coins for correct answers on the first attempt and one coin for correct answers on the second attempt. This rewards system feedback is a motivational piece that encourages students to perform at their best. Stride Skills Arcade makes it easy for teachers to assign skills based on student needs or to differentiate instruction. For example, if a student is performing more than two grade levels below, a teacher can assign skills at the student's actual instructional

Founded in 1969, the Council for Leaders in Alabama Schools (CLAS) is a professional education organization dedicated to serving the needs of over 4,000 school and district administrators across the state. CLAS includes representatives from the following organizations:

Alabama Association of Secondary School Principals

Alabama Association of Elementary School Administrators

School Superintendents of Alabama

Alabama Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development

Alabama Association of Middle School Principals

Alabama Council of Administrators of Special Education

Alabama Association for Prevention, Attendance and Support Services

Alabama Child Nutrition Directors

Alabama Association of School Personnel Administrators

Alabama Association of Career/Technical Administrators

Alabama Leaders Advocating for English Learners

Alabama Association of 504 Coordinators

level, as outlined, for example, in a student's Individual Education Program (IEP) or based on a student's intervention needs.

Students can redeem coins to play a variety of digital games provided within Stride Skills Arcade. A teacher or whole school can also set up custom rewards programs consisting of teacher-specified prizes, rewards, or privileges. Students can redeem coins for these prizes or to play games.

Schools can also schedule specific schoolwide or smaller group contests. During a contest, students can track their own progress on a scoreboard. Administrators and teachers receive an email at the end of the contest listing student scores. Certificates can be printed for winners.

Stride Skills Arcade aids teachers and administrators in a variety of ways

Each week teachers receive a report highlighting student skill strengths and weaknesses, as well as other student performance and usage information. Teachers can access real-time student data on the Stride Skills Arcade teacher dashboard. The Quiz Builder feature is used by many teachers to create assessments for entire classes or specific groups of students. The quiz builder consists of a large question bank with items based on state academic standards and skills. Quizzes are automatically graded in real time, helping teachers quickly review skill mastery and identify areas for remediation or review. Instructional videos are also available that teachers can assign as part of a preview/review for the entire class or for a specific group of students.

The Stride Skills Arcade Progress Monitoring Assessment (PMA) is a benchmark assessment designed for students in grades K–8 in reading and math and is administered three times a year. Teachers use PMA data to see which skills students have mastered. In addition to the PMA, a Gap Assessment is available in Stride Skills Arcade, which is typically given only when a teacher wants a more in-depth analysis of student strengths and weaknesses.

CLAS academic specialists communicate regularly with principals and facilitators to discuss the school's progress. Principals and school-based facilitators also always have direct access to their school's data.

Academic Specialists — The Backbone of the Program

Academic Specialists are funded by the CLAS grant and form the backbone of support for the entire lifecycle of the program. They provide initial training and orientation to schools, from which principals and teachers can determine how best to structure the program to fit their instructional and operational plans.

The CLAS staff believes their Academic Specialists are the key to successful implementation and optimal student success.

Academic specialists are available to aid and support schools throughout the year. As Rhonda Lewis, Academic Specialist, shared, “My schools feel comfortable calling me at any time. After the initial trainings, I will visit my schools and invite teachers to ask questions and discuss topics they wish to discuss.”

Frank Buck, Academic Specialist, shared, “My role is to help my schools implement and use Stride Skills Arcade, access and understand their data, and support their teachers as needed. At the beginning of the year, I help them get their students into the database so teachers can start using the program. I also archive old classes and set up new classes. And then we determine what each school’s training needs will be to start the year.” He urges teachers to regularly use performance data to provide encouragement and motivation to students. He believes that when students know this is something their teachers care about, they will care about it too.

CLAS Academic Specialists provide monthly performance summaries to each school. Rhonda Lewis shared, “I once had a school with scores that were very, very low when compared to state scores. In one year of using Stride Skills Arcade for 15 minutes every day, that school went up to a C in just a few weeks. It was amazing. I know first-hand that Stride Skills Arcade can really improve student outcomes.”

The CLAS staff believes the Academic Specialists are the key to successful implementation and optimal student success.

What the Schools Say

Leeds Elementary School (Leeds, Alabama)

Stride Skills Arcade is used for remediation as well as acceleration at Leeds Elementary School. An instructional coach and an assistant principal serve as the school-based facilitators. They meet regularly with their CLAS Academic Specialist, Beverly Smith, to review student performance and growth. Leeds Elementary uses the Stride Skills Arcade PMAs to see where students are and determine what they need to do to reach the next level.

As Justin Burns, the Principal, explained, “Our teachers love using the PMAs. It allows them to adjust for each student according to their needs. The instructional coach helps teachers differentiate based on the PMAs, so there are multiple levels of support.” The school also uses PMAs as preparation for state testing because Stride Skills Arcade “has given us an opportunity to not have any surprises. We know exactly where we stand because Stride Skills Arcade is aligned to our state standards,” said Burns.

Students have fun, and are learning, when using Stride Skills Arcade, and the data show it. Smith said, “From looking at reports, we see that the increase in usage is correlated to the increase in student success. And when you can sit down beside a student and observe them as they’re working in Stride Skills Arcade, it’s just a joy.” She related another story about how she was visiting with one of her school’s afterschool programs, and students were congratulating each other when they answered questions correctly and earned coins and badges. She could see how students were really supporting each other. As another form of encouragement for students, the school regularly hosts a pizza party for the class or grade level that logs the most correctly answered questions.

CLAS Academic Specialist Beverly Smith provides her schools a weekly summary reference sheet she calls “Tuesday Tips.” Smith said she loves to visit Leeds Elementary School and sit with the students when she has her quarterly visits. She shared a story of one visit with a second grader:

I was interviewing a student and said to him, “You are just doing great, and you are getting so many answers right. You’re earning a lot of coins and you played a lot of games. You had a lot of fun. But I would like to know, when you don’t know an answer, does Stride Skills Arcade help you? And how is it helping you?” I can still see him now when he answered me. He said, “Miss Beverly, it knows by how I answered the questions what to do to help me.” That just blew me away. A student knew exactly how the program was helping him. Did he not sum it up?

When asked about what learning gains and transformations he has seen in his school because of Stride Skills Arcade, Principal Burns shared the following:

Well, it's like anything in life. I think you get out of it what you put into it. And so, the teachers who utilize it more, we see more growth, and the teachers who do not use it as much, we will see less growth. We do see in the data a positive correlation between the amount of practice and academic outcomes and growth. Stride Skills Arcade gives our teachers another valuable resource. During intervention time a small group of students can focus on areas where they struggle or need extra help. It's not just for low-performing students; it also meets the needs of our high-performing students. It's continually pushing every kid in the classroom. They enjoy the games and the challenge of bettering themselves without the typical stress they feel around state testing.

Burns also emphasized that Stride customer support is quick to respond and help as needed. Burns added, "Whenever I have an idea of how to make the system better for my teachers and students, Stride is very receptive and responsive to our needs."

Brewton Elementary School (Brewton, Alabama)

Students at Brewton Elementary School use Stride Skills Arcade for at least 15 minutes every day. Debbie Stokes, the reading specialist, is the school-based Stride Skills Arcade facilitator. Brewton Elementary has two computer labs with instructional aides that support students during computer time, which is a required 30-minute block for every student. During that time, students work on Stride Skills Arcade. Principal Barry Wood explains the students' dedicated digital learning makes their use of the system a success for each student and their school in general.

Students not only work on Stride Skills Arcade in school but many also use it at home and during their summer and winter breaks. One student at the school enjoyed the program so much that her parents bought her a Chromebook to work on Stride Skills Arcade at home. Stokes emphasized that Stride Skills Arcade really motivates students to succeed, and they thrive on the instant gratification of the games. Stokes said, "One student said he had just set his own goals again this morning. He said he really loves that he can do that and as he gets better, the program gets harder, continuously challenging him."

Teachers love how easy Stride Skills Arcade is to use for both students and teachers. Wood noted, "Teachers really appreciate Stride Skills Arcade's adaptive nature because it pushes our high achievers." Many of the teachers at the school also use Stride Skills Arcade to build their own assessments and quizzes, and then use that data to inform their instruction.

When it comes to support from Stride, Stokes noted, "Stride is very responsive and dependable in providing us support when we need it. Whenever we provide feedback, Stride listens."

In addition to academic outcomes, administrators, teachers, and students share their Stride Skills Arcade success stories. Gina Price, CLAS State Coordinator, shared, "Teachers like that Stride Skills Arcade is a ready-made, content-based program that they're not having to develop. Teachers enjoy using the program, and they see their students motivated to use it. Teachers also appreciate receiving the performance data to understand the skills students have mastered and the areas that need additional instruction."

Frank Buck, Academic Specialist, shares that Stride Skills Arcade is really about the intangibles, "It's about kids enjoying the program, playing the games, scoring higher points, and being excited about badges. For the teachers and administrators, it's about the numbers, the percentage of questions answered correctly. The biggest purpose of the Stride Skills Arcade data is to start a conversation such that when we look at the data and we ask the why question, then we get to some of the things that can really influence teaching."

"Stride Skills Arcade allows our teachers to differentiate and meet students where they are. The greatest transformation for our school was first seeing the success of our students because of Stride when it was just an extracurricular component and then, consequently, transitioning Stride Skills Arcade to be an integral part of our daily learning program because it's making that big of a difference in our students' learning outcomes."

– Principal Barry Wood

What the Data Say

CLAS found that schools get the best results if Stride Skills Arcade is used daily for at least 15 minutes because that is when they observed the most notable increase in student academic outcomes. In an independent study done on “CLAS’s use of Stride’s Supplemental Program on ACT Aspire test scores in Alabama,” the results included the following:



Stride Skills Arcade students overall improved math benchmark pass rates by **15%** compared to their demographically matched peers who improved pass rate by **8%**.



For reading benchmarks, Stride Skills Arcade students improved by **10%** whereas their peers showed no statistically significant change.



Economically disadvantaged Stride Skills Arcade students improved math pass rate by **23%** whereas their peers showed no statistically significant change.



Students who are black and economically disadvantaged improved at a greater rate than their peers for math pass rate (**23% vs. 10%**) and reading pass rate (**18% vs. 13%**).



Students in Special Education improved reading benchmark pass rate by **57%** compared to an improvement of **33%** by their matched peers.

(Henry & Carpenter, 2017)

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References

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Southern University Laboratory Virtual School

Baton Rouge, Louisiana

Southern University operates a full-time online school serving kindergarten through 12th grade students across the state of Louisiana using Stride Learning Solutions curriculum, teachers, and mentors

As part of the three-campus Southern University System in Louisiana, the Southern University Laboratory Virtual School (SULVS) is a full-time online public school serving kindergarten through twelfth-grade students throughout Louisiana. Families have the unique opportunity to enroll in a virtual school rooted in the rich history of Southern University, with the potential of entering a postsecondary education experience in the university after graduation. The sole requirement for students to attend SULVS is to be a Louisiana resident and have a 2.0 grade point average. Students complete all their learning online, while working closely with their teachers via video conferencing, telephone calls, emails, and texts.

Upon enrollment, SULVS staff meet with families to share the SULVS vision and to discuss student expectations and ensure that students and their families understand what it takes to be successful at SULVS. Nadia Seals, SULVS Director, emphasized, "We have found through experience that it is very important to share our vision, policies, and procedures with our students and families so that everyone is on the same page from the start."

Staffing and Strong Support Enhance Learning



Single year
improvement
in Louisiana
LEAP 2025
scores in
7 of 10
subject
areas

SULVS is led by two full-time educators, the Director, and the Academic Advisor/Guidance Counselor. The teaching and mentoring staffs are provided by Stride as part of Stride Learning Solutions' full-time online school program. Stride's core subject teachers are certified in Louisiana.

At the start of each year, Stride teachers set up courses and send introductory communication via emails and phone calls to families and students. Throughout the year they maintain regular contact with students and families to help ensure student success. Teachers update announcements and add resources as necessary to help further student

Families have the unique opportunity to enroll in a virtual school rooted in the rich history of Southern University, with the potential of entering a postsecondary education experience in the university after graduation

Virtual School

Type of school:

**Statewide full-time
online public school**

Grades:

K-12

Program opened:

2012

Students served:

79 high school students

96 middle school students

170 elementary school students

Ethnicity:

55% White

39% Black

3% Hispanic

1% Asian

2% American Indian

Free/Reduced-price lunch:

25%

Staff:

1 SULVS Director

1 SULVS Academic advisor

1 Stride-employed K-5

Teacher Supervisor

1 Stride-employed 6-12

Teacher Supervisor

13 Stride-employed Teachers

2 Stride-employed Mentors

(6th-12th grade)

Instructional model:

**Full-time online
virtual instruction**

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

SULVS is a full-time online public school serving K–12 students across the state of Louisiana.

Stride Learning Solutions online course catalog is the basis of the online curriculum. Students and parents can access digital learning 24 hours a day, seven days a week from any place an internet connection is available.

Online courses are taught by Louisiana-certified Stride-employed teachers.

Graduates of SULVS receive their diploma from the Southern University Laboratory School.

Students can enroll in dual enrollment classes at any university in the state of Louisiana.

SULVS values the strong academic reputation of Southern University, and students and their parents are proud to be a part of its community.

SULVS received Stride Learning Solutions' 2019 Transformation Award based on growth and transformation

learning. Teachers grade all course assignments and discussions, providing personalized, targeted feedback and resources to help students master content. After reviewing student data, teachers set up one-on-one and small group sessions to communicate with students to keep them engaged, motivated, and moving forward. When students are not on pace, teachers create a plan to get students back on track. As an added source of support, teachers provide students with drop-in, real-time online sessions where students can ask questions.

In addition to Stride teachers, Stride academic mentors provide an additional layer of support specifically for SULVS 6th through 12th grade students. Stride academic mentors are responsible for contacting students and/or families on a weekly basis, coaching students to be active and responsible learners, acting as liaison between students and teachers, and documenting students' needs and communicating them to all stakeholders. Stride academic mentors also provide an additional tier of accountability for students, who can easily get lost, especially in an online learning environment.

At the elementary level, students do not have mentors. Instead, Stride teachers stay closely connected with students to keep track of their learning. To help coordinate teaching and support activities at SULVS, there are two Stride-employed Supervisor Teachers, one for the grades K–5 teachers and another for the grades 6–12 teachers.

To ensure regular staff communication, biweekly instructional meetings are held between the Stride instructional team and SULVS staff to discuss concerns teachers and academic mentors may have about students who need additional support and how to best address those issues. This meeting also addresses updates to the school's calendar, and any system, policy, or procedural changes. A second biweekly meeting is also held focused on planning for state testing as well as providing an opportunity for the SULVS team to offer feedback and requests to Stride for future changes and enhancements. Seals shared, "We enjoy a constant conversation with Stride, which is so helpful as we continue to grow."

Self-Paced Online Curriculum is the Backbone of Student Learning

SULVS online students are located throughout Louisiana and access courses using their own devices. Students usually engage in each of their courses daily and can access their lessons in any order at any time. There is no requirement to attend a physical school building, but students must take high-stakes state tests at pre-determined, proctored testing sites.

State certified teachers employed by Stride are the facilitating teachers for all online courses. SULVS uses Stride Learning Solutions individualized curriculum aligned to state standards. Students and teachers meet daily on a pre-determined schedule for live virtual video sessions for each of

their classes using Stride's Class Connect. Class Connect sessions are also used to help prepare students for Louisiana state tests, providing an additional layer of focused support for students and their families.

A Stride Gap Assessment provides regular feedback showing where students are academically, including valuable data for teachers to help understand student needs throughout the school year. Data from the Louisiana state tests are used to examine growth from year to year.

SULVS offers dual enrollment courses at any university in Louisiana. Seals expressed, "We've had students attend Delgado Community College in New Orleans, University of Louisiana in Monroe, the University of Louisiana in Lafayette, and more. Our students are spread all across the state, so we work with them to find dual enrollment opportunities close to home." SULVS strives to expose all of its students to postsecondary education in as many ways as possible. To that end, SULVS schedules state testing sites on college campuses whenever possible which helps students feel more comfortable in postsecondary environments.

SULVS has recently added Advanced Placement courses to its offerings. Next year, the school plans to add honors courses. Seals emphasized that she and her team try to add at least one new offering each year for students. These additional options add rigor to the program and help students excel.

Success is Measured in Multiple Ways

Seals shared that she receives frequent positive feedback from families. One parent, for example, talked about how grateful she was for SULVS and how the school's flexibility met her family's needs:

My daughter enrolled at Southern University Lab Virtual School in the fall of 2018 because the school she previously attended was no longer willing to partner with the performing arts school she was also attending. Enrolling in SULVS was easy, seamless, and smooth. I especially appreciated the pacing schedule for each course which provided an aerial view of the material that would be covered each semester and a timeline for completion. The pacing schedule made it easy for my daughter to work at her own speed. Because of the schedule flexibility SULVS provided, she was able to practice her instrument, travel, and attend rehearsals and performances, all while being a full-time SULVS student. Teachers are accommodating, knowledgeable, and helpful. The administration and faculty are easily accessible. Anytime my daughter has questions or needs clarity, she emails her teachers, and they promptly respond. Southern University Lab Virtual School was the perfect fit for our family.

From school year 2017–2018 to 2018–2019 SULVS students improved their scores on the Louisiana Educational Assessment Program 2025 (LEAP 2025) assessment in seven out of ten subject areas. LEAP 2025 math and science scores, ACT scores, and graduation rates have all consistently seen year-to-year increases in recent years.

Nadia Seals' vision for SULVS is to continuously expand offerings to meet the needs of as many children as possible in Louisiana as well as provide social, emotional, and mental support. SULVS strives to create opportunities for students to engage in new experiences and broaden their horizons. As Seals shared, "I think we're a hidden gem here in Louisiana. In everything we do we make sure we keep our students in mind and work to help them progress in every way possible."

SULVS strives to expose all of its students to postsecondary education in as many ways as possible. To that end, SULVS schedules state testing sites on college campuses whenever possible which helps students feel more comfortable in postsecondary environments.

"I think we're a hidden gem here in Louisiana. In everything we do we make sure we keep our students in mind and work to help them progress in every way possible."

– Nadia Seals,
SULVS Director

Snoqualmie Valley School District

Snoqualmie Valley, Washington

Through full-time online and blended learning models a dedicated districtwide online learning campus reaps dividends for students in many ways, including credit recovery, credit enhancement, and Alternative Learning Experience (ALE) programs

Located thirty miles east of Seattle in the scenic Cascade foothills, Snoqualmie Valley School District (SVSD) covers over 400 square miles, and serves families in Snoqualmie, North Bend, Fall City, and the surrounding areas. Their 11 award-winning schools offer the district's 7,200 students a strong academic foundation, coupled with enrichment activities and support to help students discover their passions for life-long learning and success after graduation. According to district officials it routinely outpaces the state average on the Smarter Balanced statewide assessments and seeks to prepare all students for college, career, and citizenship.

The district's sole traditional high school, Mount Si High School, home to Mount Si Online, has been included on the U.S. News & World Report Best High Schools lists and was awarded the magazine's silver medals for the past six years, based on reading, math, and college readiness data. Mount Si High School boasts a 95.2% four-year graduation rate, and Mount Si Online plays a pivotal role in keeping their graduation rate over 15% higher than the state average.

Mount Si Online began operations in 2002 and started using Stride Learning Solutions (formerly FuelEd) content in 2010. Mount Si Online digital learning options are as diverse as the SVSD students and their individual learning needs. High school students have the option to take online or blended courses for original credit or credit recovery. Students across the district can opt into a full-time online model that meets all state requirements for alternative learning, and advanced eighth grade students can take online courses for credit enrichment over the summer.

Alternative Learning Model

Washington's Alternative Learning Experience (ALE) is a state approved form of public education in which some or all of the instruction is delivered outside of a regular classroom schedule. Mount Si Online ALE follows all public education requirements as well as Washington Chapter 392-550 WAC.¹ There are typically about 20 students attending Mount Si Online ALE every year. Students accessing ALE through Mount Si Online can take all of their classes online, rarely needing to step into the physical school building, or they can opt for a blended format where they spend time in the school building and take up to two of the courses during the

traditional seven period day as ALE. Students have a variety of reasons to choose an ALE, including preference for an asynchronous learning environment, parent preference for schooling from home, students with special education needs that are better served in an online format, and students in the Running Start² program, typically juniors and seniors who are earning college credit from a local college or university who elect to meet some of their high school requirements online. Some students choose to fast-track



100% pass rate for 200 Stride courses in 2020 calendar year

DISTRICT

Type of school:

Districtwide blended and fully online learning school

Schools:

6 Elementary schools

3 Middle schools

2 High schools

Grades:

Pre-school – 12

Program opened:

2002

District Enrollment

7,200

Ethnicity:

74.6% White

8.9% Hispanic

7.9% Asian

1.1% Black

.5% American Indian

.2% Native Hawaiian

6.8% Two or more

English Learners (ELs):

2.7%

Free/Reduced-price lunch:

8.9%

Students served:

175

Program staff:

1 online learning program coordinator

Stride-employed teachers for all courses

Instructional model:

Full-time online, part-time online, and blended

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Mount Si Online, a partnership between Snoqualmie Valley School District (SVSD) and Stride Learning Solutions, provides a districtwide online school, offering a full range of digital learning options, including credit enhancement, credit recovery, blended learning, and an alternative learning model.

Stride Learning Solutions online courses and Stride teachers are used for all Mount Si Online offerings

Snoqualmie Valley School District is located east of Seattle and serves 7,200 students over a large geographic area.

Mount Si Online began operations in 2012 and has continued to innovate and grow since its inception.

Since fall semester 2018, Mount Si Online boasts a cumulative passage rate of 97%.

The SVSD four-year graduation rate is 15% higher than the state average.

Students and staff are equally happy with the quality and outcomes for Mount Si Online.

According to the SVSD staff, the quality of Stride Learning Solutions courses and support offered by Stride has significantly improved the efficiency and ease of managing and operating the Mount Si Online program.

their ALE by taking three classes at a time on a quarterly basis rather than the traditional semester system employed by SVSD. Fast-tracking allows students to earn their six credits each year without being overwhelmed with too many online classes at the same time. ALE students who want to take an additional seventh credit each year are able to do so for a nominal fee.

Mount Si Online utilizes Stride teachers for their ALE online courses. Stride teachers are employees of Stride and are certified teachers in the state of Washington. Students in ALE are required to connect with their Stride online teachers at least once a week. Stride teachers are well-versed in Washington ALE requirements and proactively reach out to each student weekly making it easy for the students to uphold their communication requirements. In addition to connecting with the Stride teacher, ALE students connect with the Mount Si Online Learning Coordinator monthly. Students typically meet with the coordinator in person but can also do so using video or phone conferencing. Mid-term and final exams are proctored for all students. A total of 91 courses were taken through Mount Si Online ALE during the calendar year 2020 with a pass rate of 100%.

Blended Learning Model

In Mount Si High School and Two Rivers High School, SVSD's alternative high school, students can opt to take courses in a blended format through Mount Si Online. Typically, these students are taking the majority of their classes in a traditional format and choose to take one course online during the semester. While most students come to the Mount Si Online dedicated digital learning lab during the school day to work on their online class during their designated online period, a few students opt to take their online course(s) at home before or after school. Again, Mount Si Online utilizes Stride Learning Solutions courses and Stride teachers to teach these courses, while the district's Online Learning Coordinator serves as a second point of support for the students. Blended courses run on the traditional school calendar with 18-week semesters. There is no cost for students to participate in blended courses. A total of 87 courses were taken for original credit through Mount Si Online online/blended format in calendar year 2020 with a pass rate of 100%.

Credit Recovery

Mount Si Online also relies on Stride Learning Solutions courses and Stride teachers for its credit recovery program. Like blended courses, credit recovery courses can be taken at home or in the online classroom lab during the traditional seven period day. Unlike other courses, credit recovery courses run for 90-days. These courses have flexible start dates which allow students to access them when they need them. Students taking Stride Learning Solutions courses for credit recovery who achieve mastery at least at the 70% threshold during a unit precheck may advance past the content for that unit and take the unit exam. This level of personalization respects students' prior knowledge and allows them to focus their time on content they truly need to master. Thirty-eight course credits were attempted for recovery credit through Mount Si Online in calendar year 2020, and again the school boasted a 100% passage rate.

Credit Enhancement

SVSD students can also earn additional credits through Mount Si Online. A wide range of Stride Learning Solutions courses, such as Algebra 2 or Biology, taught by Stride teachers are used for online credit enhancement courses. This program allows students to earn original credit in addition to the traditional seven period day for a small fee. Credit enhancement courses operate on the traditional 18-week semester schedule and are available to full-time ALE, Mount Si High School and Two Rivers High School students. The credit enhancement program is a great sense of pride for SVSD as an enrichment opportunity that supports students and allows them to advance based on their abilities and interests.

Why Mount Si Online Uses Stride Learning Solutions Curriculum and Stride Teachers

Stride gives Mount Si Online the ability to offer robust digital learning options for the roughly 2,000 high school students in SVSD. The school uses the full array of Stride Learning Solutions courses, including credit recovery courses. Up to 200 students are accessing digital learning options from Mount Si Online at a time. With confidence in the quality of Stride Learning Solutions content and Stride teachers, Mount Si Online can successfully run with one full-time staff member, the Online Learning Coordinator. Stride offers specific ALE sections of courses for Mount Si Online and the Online Coordinator, Amy Fauver Lane, reports that these sections and Stride's understanding of and adherence to Washington ALE regulations makes her job as Online Learning Coordinator super easy. She also appreciates that Stride, like Mount Si Online, is constantly evolving and moving in the right direction. Stride also offers students on and off ramps throughout the year freeing them from the traditional school calendar and/or schedule. This level of flexibility helps to address the learning needs of Mount Si Online students who need more than a one-size-fits-all model of learning. Fauver Lane notes that, "Stride offers solutions and eliminates stress for students looking toward graduation."

How Mount Si Online Measures Success

Mount Si Online follows traditional education measures of success, including grades, course completion, and graduation rates. During calendar year 2020, over 200 Stride courses were taken online at Mount Si Online with a 100% passing rate. This success rate of online learning at SVSD, as shown in the table below, is a key contributor to the district's impressive 94% four-year graduation rate in a state where the graduation rate is below 80%.

Mount Si Online course enrollments and pass rate by semester (enrollments/pass rate)

	Fall 2018	Spring 2019	Summer 2019	Fall 2019	Spring 2020	Summer 2020	Fall 2020
Blended	14 / 100%	29 / 100%	51 / 98%	10 / 90%	20 / 100%	42 / 100%	25 / 100%
Credit Recovery	13 / 92%	20 / 95%	53 / 83%	7 / 100%	11 / 100%	23 / 100%	4 / 100%
ALE	35 / 100%	44 / 97%	N/A	22 / 95%	36 / 100%	N/A	55 / 100%
TOTAL	62 / 98%	93 / 98%	104 / 90%	39 / 95%	67 / 100%	65 / 100%	84 / 100%

As an educator, Fauver Lane also focuses on the qualitative measures of student success at Mount Si Online. Stories of students who were enduring difficult times but able to stay on track for graduation while learning valuable 21st century skills abound at Mount Si Online. She keeps a note from a student who credited Mount Si Online with earning their trust back in education.

Success Perspectives

Fauver Lane notes, "Mount Si High School principals are very happy with the results we are achieving at Mount Si Online. In fact, they've even told me that other districts have called to learn more about our online learning program as they are looking to build their own." Graduation rates are a solid quantitative measure of success; however, at Mount Si Online success is also defined qualitatively by individuals impacted by their digital learning experience.

What Students Say About Mount Si Online

Mount Si Online has a positive impact across SVSD. Students report that the flexibility and asynchronous learning model is impactful, and they appreciate how online learning can free up time during their busy daily schedules. Having access to recorded versions of the high-quality live lessons taught by Stride teachers gives students the power over pace and place in their learning. Stride teachers are readily available throughout the day, which makes receiving support easy for the students and the Online Learning Coordinator. Here is what several students have shared about their Mount Si Online experience:

"My favorite thing is that I can do it at my own pace whenever I want. I also love the way that the website is laid out."

"My favorite thing about my course is the layout and how much time they give us to finish our tasks."

"I like my online course because I know all the assignments that will be assigned throughout the semester."

"I like that I get to choose when I do the course. If I am not feeling up to the course one day, I am able to skip a day and get caught up the next. I also really like my teacher. She has been very helpful and supportive."

"My favorite part of online classes is the flexibility in being able to control my own schedule. It allows me to carefully weigh priorities and plan out the day, as well as gives me a sense of freedom and individuality."

Notes

1 The purpose of this Chapter is to ensure that students enrolled in an alternative learning experience offered by a Washington state public school district have educational opportunities designed to meet their individual needs and to provide general program requirements for the alternative learning experiences offered. <https://apps.leg.wa.gov/WAc/default.aspx?cite=392-550>

2 The Running Start Program is available to upperclassmen and allows them to meet some of their high school graduation requirements online while simultaneously enrolled in a local college or university to get a "running start" on the college degree.

Newman–Crows Landing Unified School District

Newman, California

Online credit recovery program for high school and alternative education students helps district achieve 100% graduation rate and keep kids in school

Situated about an hour-and-a-half southeast of San Jose on the west side of the San Joaquin Valley, the Newman-Crows Landing Unified School District (NCLUSD) is a traditional school district, located in Newman, California, serving the communities of Newman, Crows Landing, and Diablo Grande. NCLUSD uses Stride Learning Solutions online credit recovery curriculum to help increase graduation rates and keep students in school.

When Randy Fillpot became the district's superintendent in 2013, the district was using online credit recovery courses he knew were not rigorous enough. Fillpot shared, "The program back then, for example, made it pretty easy for students to cheat." A few years later, in 2017, NCLUSD was introduced to Stride Learning Solutions online credit recovery curriculum, specifically designed for high school students to recover credit for a course without having to repeat the course. Fillpot and his team found that Stride's credit recovery program was much more robust and engaging than the previous credit recovery programs they had used. Fillpot shared, "By using Stride Learning Solutions credit recovery we had four years straight of graduating all of our seniors."



The credit recovery program is located in the district's two high schools, Orestimba High School and West Side Valley High School, and has steadily grown and become extremely successful. To help support its growth, in 2019 each high school added new study halls specifically for students taking credit recovery courses. Support is provided to credit recovery students by two study hall teachers, three learning directors, and two summer school teachers.

Rick Gonzalez, principal of West Side Valley High School, shared, "This is an access and equity situation for our district's credit recovery students. Our credit recovery program is giving these students opportunities many other schools

do not have, and we are grateful to be able to provide that for our kids. And these opportunities would not be possible if we did not have credit recovery curriculum from Stride Learning Solutions."

Dedicated Support Structure Ensures Success

Using a district-issued Chromebook or other personal device, students engage with their credit recovery courses in the dedicated credit recovery study hall at school, and they can also access these courses outside of school from home or other locations.

DISTRICT

Type of school:

High school and alternative education school

Grades:

9–12

Program started:

2016

District enrollment:

3,200

Students served:

Orestimba High School 111

West Side Valley High School 30

Ethnicity:

78% Hispanic

15.16% White

1.62% Black

.81% Filipino

.59% Asian

.22% Native American

.16% Pacific Islander

3.44% Multiple/other

Free/Reduced-price lunch:

Orestimba High School 66%

West Side Valley High School 70%

English learners:

Orestimba High School 25.2%

West Side Valley High School 36.6%

Staff:

1 High school principal

1 Alternative education principal

3 Learning directors

2 Study Hall teachers

2 Summer school teachers

Instructional model:

Online learning in school lab

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Comprehensive Stride Learning Solutions online credit recovery program at NCLUSD helps increase graduate rates and keep students in school.

Because of the credit recovery program's success, NCLUSD began offering a dedicated study hall to support students who are engaging in credit recovery.

From 2017 to 2021, the percent of A-G students qualifying to enter the State of California higher education system grew from 17% to 53%.

Approximately 64% of NCLUSD students participate in a CTE pathway utilizing Stride Learning Solutions career readiness courses.

Credit recovery program learning directors and teachers meet regularly with students and parents/caregivers to provide a support structure for student success.

Students are assigned to credit recovery study hall for two 90-minute sessions a week. A teacher is present in each study hall to provide direct support to assist students as they complete their credit recovery courses. In addition to the teachers, students also have an assigned Learning Director (LD). There are three LDs serving Orestimba High School and one that is shared with West Side Valley High School, the district's alternative school. LDs help register students in the

correct online credit recovery courses and monitor their progress. Courses are self-directed and teachers serve as facilitators alongside the LDs. Each of the LDs has a specific caseload of students to support.

Matthew Clark serves as the study hall teacher for Orestimba High School working with credit recovery students during that period. Clark explained his role as being the taskmaster, providing an environment in which students can focus. Clark sets clear expectations for his students. He explained, "The students and I work together each week to set goals to ensure they are progressing and not procrastinating."

To ensure these goals are met, the LDs manage their students' cases individually. At the start of each year, LDs send out a letter to each family letting them know their students are deficient in their graduation requirements. The letter includes specific dates for quarterly checkpoints so that parents know when they will receive an update on their student's progress. By the third quarter meetings LDs inform parents and students of options still available for completing credit recovery courses. Progress checkpoints include meeting with students and sometimes with parents as well.

The NCLUSD team works together to help support students no matter what it takes. Manpreet Dola, Learning Director, emphasized that students always have access to their teachers and LDs, which is critical for the credit recovery students, as many are at-risk students. Dola explained, "Most of our students neither have the structure at home nor the skills to be successful. Providing them this structured approach gives them a big advantage."

One Course at a Time

Students enroll in and complete one credit recovery course at a time. Originally, students signed up for all their credit recovery classes at the same time, but over time teachers noticed students having a hard time focusing and getting passing grades. Clark noted, "Students struggled, especially those who were easily distracted. Some never really finished any one course. They just hadn't developed the time management or

"By using Stride Learning Solutions credit recovery we had four years straight of graduating all of our seniors."

– Randy Fillpot,
Superintendent

“We work very closely with the study hall teachers. For example, each week we give them a spreadsheet highlighting deficiencies in credit recovery course progress and completions. When the students finish a class, we place that class on their transcript and work to keep them moving forward with their next class. Once they’ve completed all their credit recovery classes, we enroll them in a regular study hall class. The goal for us is to facilitate the kids to get their credits, graduate, and meet their California A–G requirements.”

– Manpreet Dola,
Learning Director

organizational skills to be successful. And so, by trimming it down to one course at a time, it was easier for them to focus.” Clark added, “By concentrating on one course at a time, students don’t have to worry about everything at once. They really do a lot better, not just grade-wise, but also in understanding the content.” Dola shared, “I think our one-class-at-a-time process has not only helped the students, but it has helped us as well.”

Students have a minimum goal of completing ten percent of their course each week, thereby finishing a course in ten weeks. This process helps keep students on track and grades above passing. Dola emphasized, “We work with the student and parent to develop a timeline for the student to finish so that everyone is on the same page to get the student over the finish line to graduate.”

A key aspect of Stride Learning Solutions credit recovery courses that the NCLUSD team appreciates is how students can bypass curriculum by demonstrating mastery of what they already understand and know. This mastery-based approach really motivates students. Once students complete a course, they email their study hall teacher who checks their work and assigns them a grade. Then the teacher lets the student’s LD know their grade and that they are ready to enroll in their next credit recovery class. Dola and the other two LDs also add the course information to each student’s transcript to update their academic record.

Staying in School and Graduating Spell Success

Over the five years using the Stride Learning Solutions credit recovery curriculum, NCLUSD has seen many successes. Kim Bettencourt, Director of Curriculum and Instruction and Title Nine Coordinator, shared, “Many students in the alternative education program catch up on their credits and re-enter the traditional high school to graduate. Additionally, in the five years we’ve been using Stride Learning Solutions credit recovery curriculum, our percent of A–G students qualifying to enter the State of California system has more than tripled, growing from 17% to 53%.” The NCLUSD staff believes that the Stride Learning Solutions credit recovery approach has resulted in a near-perfect graduation rate for their student population. Students who do not make May graduation are able to take needed credit recovery courses over the summer and receive their diploma in August. Rick Gonzalez explained, “If it wasn’t for Stride Learning Solutions, I don’t know that we would have been able to have that high of a graduation rate.” Superintendent Fillpot shared, “Due to the success of our Stride Learning Solutions credit recovery curriculum and our robust support structure, we no longer need to shift as many of our students to the alternative education school.”

Many students have expressed positive sentiments about the NCLUSD’s credit recovery program. One recent graduate of Orestimba High School, for example, shared, “My credit recovery courses allowed me to make up in areas where I lacked success. It was a second chance given to me by my counselors as an option instead of giving up on me.” Another graduate said, “I’m grateful for these online credit recovery courses because they’ve helped me and have given me the opportunity to graduate and go to college and be able to do what I want to do.” Specifically speaking of the support he received from the teachers and LDs, another graduate of Orestimba High School expressed, “The teachers and staff at NCLUSD don’t just come here to teach and get a paycheck. They really want to help kids succeed and graduate.”

Watson Institute Social Center for Academic Achievement

Sharpsburg, Pennsylvania

Children with highly specialized needs thrive in a special education school using a flexible in-person blended learning model incorporating Stride teachers and powered by Stride Learning Solutions online curriculum

Located in western Pennsylvania the Watson Institute is an educational organization made up of special education schools, programs, and resources for children with special needs and their families. It provides education and outpatient behavioral health services for children and adolescents up to the age of 21. Watson has become a valuable partner for local public schools that do not have the resources to fully support students with extreme special needs. Whether it's an autism spectrum disorder diagnosis, neurological impairment, or another serious emotional challenge, Watson is on a mission to help students reach their fullest potential in all aspects of their lives. Through their network of four unique schools, they offer a variety of special education resources and have a dedicated staff consisting of teachers, therapists, and other professionals and pre-professionals that specialize in working with their unique student populations. Watson often serves as the Least Restrictive Environment¹ (LRE) for their students and is a treasured educational asset for families and educators in their area.

The Watson Institute Social Center for Academic Achievement (WISCA), one of the Watson Institute schools, is housed in a 50,000 square foot state of the art school building. This facility is a key contribution to the growing revitalization of one of Pittsburgh's most vibrant neighborhoods. WISCA is a private elementary, middle, and high school for students ages 5–21 and includes mental health services for students who need them. WISCA is licensed by the Pennsylvania Departments of Education and Welfare and its team is widely recognized for its expertise in special education and mental health.

SCHOOL

Type of school:
Private special education school

Grades:
K–12

Ages:
5–21

Program opened:
2010

School Enrollment:
46

Students served:
46

Program staff:
1 Principal
7 WISCA special education teachers

Instructional model:
Individual station rotation blended learning



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

The Watson Institute Social Center for Academic Achievement is designed to meet the needs of children and adolescents with High Functioning Autism Spectrum Disorder.

WISCA students require therapeutic intervention and supports that are not delivered in a traditional educational setting.

WISCA uses Stride Learning Solutions core curriculum, Stride teachers, Stride Learning Solutions premier electives, and Stride Career Prep curriculum.

With Stride teachers and Stride online curriculum providing core instruction, WISCA's staff can focus its attention on meeting the unique social and emotional needs of their students.

Students are grouped in classes of no more than eight to ensure students receive the right level of individual attention needed to meet their academic, social, and emotional goals

Students receive highly specialized instructional services with a ratio of at least one staff member for every four students, assuring each child receives the tailored attention needed to reduce frustration and foster success. WISCA emphasizes research-based standards in reading, writing, and math instruction that encourage children to see themselves as capable and creative. WISCA relies on curriculum and instructional staff from Stride Learning Solutions to deliver academic content in a self-paced blended format. In addition to academic skills taught through the Stride curriculum, WISCA also includes opportunities for artistic success through art and music classes.

Blended Learning Model – A Perfect Fit

WISCA utilizes a fully in-person, individualized, self-paced rotation blended learning model, with students placed in classes of no more than eight students. Each classroom is staffed with one special education teacher and at least one assistant teacher. Students have their own private, personalized cubicle workstation with a desktop computer. As students progress, they are given the opportunity to earn laptop privileges, which allow them to study in more casual learning spaces that may be better suited for their sensory learning needs.



Students receive therapeutic support from certified professionals in a one-on-one format for a minimum of 30 minutes a week. Class therapy sessions are held at least twice a week, usually 30 minutes in length. Lastly, therapists are available for students on an as-needed basis. WISCA teachers are specially trained to help students with emotional needs but having regular access to certified therapists provides WISCA students with an additional set of advocates ready to help them prepare for life after high school.

In addition to having their core academic and social/emotional needs met at WISCA, students also have opportunities to learn art and music throughout their week. Research has shown that learning art and music improves recall and retention of verbal information, helps to advance math achievement, and boosts reading and English language arts skills. The WISCA team has partnered with Stride to build a comprehensive program that gives students the best opportunity for success after high school.

A Typical Daily Schedule

Class assignments and schedules are determined by grade level bands. The day begins at 9:15 a.m. and concludes at 2:15 p.m.; high school students stay for an additional 25 minutes to wrap up work and have a social break. For middle and high school students, WISCA teachers create a daily visual schedule for each student, listing current Stride Learning Solutions lessons as well as their non-academic lessons and supports for the day. Students are encouraged to complete at least four Stride Learning Solutions lessons a day. Elementary school teachers personally guide their students through their daily activities.

Middle school students usually work on online lessons five times each day, with some flexibility in choosing desired courses (see schedule for middle and high school students in table below). Short curriculum sessions of 20 to 40 minutes each help students focus without getting burned out. WISCA utilizes best-practices by ensuring that students get breaks throughout the day. The schedule for high school students is largely the same as consistency helps students feel more comfortable with their learning. Regular adjustments are made as needed to schedule in physical education, art, music, and individual therapy.

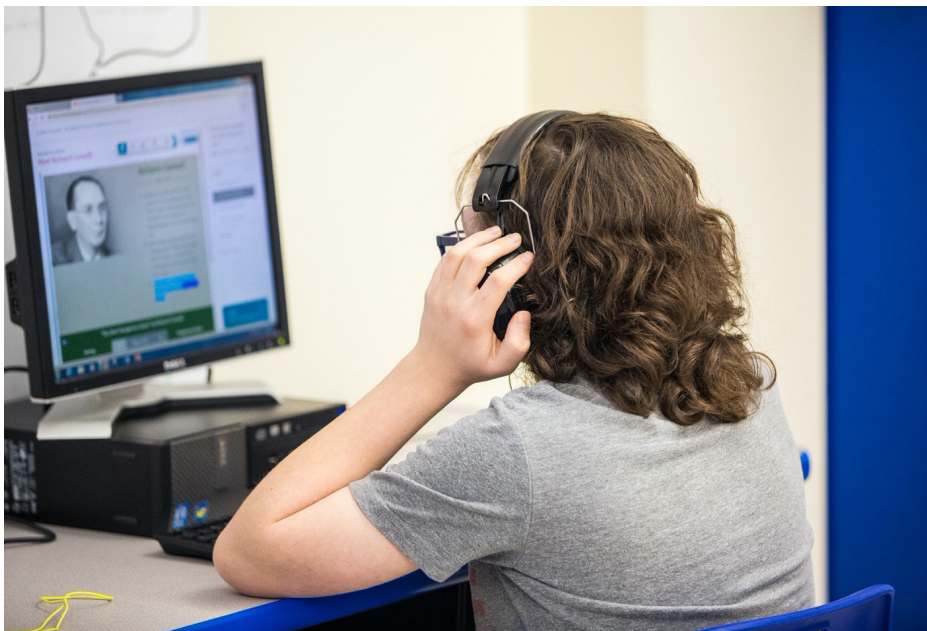
Typical daily schedule for middle school and high school students

Middle school		High school		
Arrival		Students arrive, choose lunch, discuss previous evening with peers and staff.		
Morning meeting	15 min	Watch student news, discuss classroom schedules, and check in (How are you feeling? What is your goal for the day? Who can help you?).		
Online curriculum	20 min	In private workstations, work on Stride Learning Solutions curriculum with Stride teachers.		
Gym	30 min	Work on building healthy habits based on individual abilities and goals.	Break & teachers (20 min)	Work with WISCA teachers and take a social/sensory break.
Online Curriculum	40 min	In private workstations, work on Stride Learning Solutions curriculum with Stride teachers.		
Break & teachers	20 min	Work with WISCA teachers/staff and take a social/sensory break to walk, read, play games, etc.		
Online Curriculum	40 min	In private workstations, work on Stride Learning Solutions curriculum with Stride teachers.	Social skills group (30 min)	Mental health therapist leads discussion on social and emotional skills
LUNCH	40/30* min	Eat lunch in the classrooms and socialize. Upper class students can request school appropriate music or videos		
Online Curriculum	40 min	In private workstations, work on Stride Learning Solutions curriculum with Stride teachers.		
Break & teachers	20 min	Work with WISCA teachers/staff and take a social/sensory break to walk, read, play games, etc.		
Online Curriculum	35 min	In private workstations, work on Stride Learning Solutions curriculum with Stride teachers.		

*Lunch for middle school students is 10 minutes longer.

Why Stride Learning Solutions?

With the school's highly structured in-person blended model designed for students with intense social and emotional needs, WISCA needed a provider that could truly partner with them to meet the diverse academic needs of their students. Many of the students at WISCA are academically high performers, but their unique needs make a traditional school environment too challenging. Since the staff at WISCA are specialists in working with students on the autism spectrum, they needed an online curriculum and platform provider who had highly qualified teachers in all academic areas. Stride teachers are experts in their content areas and WISCA teachers are experts in working with students with intense emotional and behavioral needs. That is what makes Stride the perfect partner for WISCA. Jennifer Dixon-Wagner, Teacher Coach, explained, "The Stride Learning Solutions curriculum is helpful because our students are all working at different levels. At Watson, no two students are in the



same curriculum at the same time or completing their coursework at the same pace. Using Stride Learning Solutions curriculum and Stride teachers gives our teachers the time they need to do so much more than just deliver content in the classrooms.”

Stride Learning Solutions curriculum allows students to advance at their own pace, which is especially important for the students at WISCA. One can't predict when a student on the autism spectrum may have an off day. With Stride, students don't fall behind just because they have other needs that must be addressed on a given day. Students can pause their academic learning to have their social and emotional needs met without falling behind in their coursework. Stride courses and teachers are waiting for them to continue where they left off when they are ready. WISCA teachers can support students with their needs on Maslow's hierarchy and, when they are ready to pick back up academically, Stride is there

to support them through Bloom's taxonomy. Marcia Laus, WISCA Program Coordinator, noted, "Our Watson teachers are the bridge between Stride, students, and curriculum."

Students at WISCA begin working in Stride courses at the 4th grade level. In addition to the Stride core curriculum for students from grades 4 through 12, WISCA uses Stride premier electives and Stride Career Prep curriculum. These curriculum options allow students to explore a variety of compelling electives to help them discover their passions and prepare them for transition to adulthood and the workplace. WISCA staff understands the value of helping students find their passions so that they are more college- or career-ready when they graduate.

WISCA and Stride Teachers — A Winning Team

Due to the small class sizes and intense personal learning focus, being a new teacher at WISCA requires a lot of training and adjusting from a more traditional educational model. Stride Learning Solutions allows WISCA teachers to be more fluid in their roles in the classroom. Since most WISCA teachers are experts in special education and not in specific content areas, relying on Stride teachers for content expertise allows WISCA to hire, train, and retain some of the best special education staff available.

As students move into higher level content (e.g., Chemistry, Calculus, etc.), it becomes more difficult for WISCA teachers to build on the content that students are seeing in their online classes. Knowing that Stride teachers are experts in these areas helps to forge a strong partnership between students, local in-person teachers, and Stride's online teachers. It's impossible for a single special education teacher with eight students taking different courses in four main subject areas plus electives to meet each student's academic needs and be an expert in all the different fields. Without Stride Learning Solutions digital curriculum and Stride teachers, WISCA would not be able to provide the level of personalized attention that each student does and should receive. This personalized attention is essential for meeting the student's social and emotional needs. "Online instructors at Stride are wonderful about getting back to us and communicating," notes Dixon-Wagner.

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Measuring Success and Impact at WISCA

The WISCA staff agree that hands down, the ability for WISCA teachers to adjust pace for students is the most positive impact from their partnership with Stride. Marcia Laus, Program Coordinator, describes this aspect as critical for their students. Dixon-Wagner said, "If a student can't do their work today, they are not going to miss out on their learning. A bad day doesn't set them behind with Stride curriculum. Their learning will still be there waiting for them when they are ready tomorrow."

Without Stride Learning Solutions digital curriculum and Stride teachers, WISCA would not be able to provide the level of personalized attention that each student does and should receive.

Leaders at WISCA also appreciate the wide variety of classes that are available for students through the Stride Learning Solutions catalog. With only a small staff, WISCA can offer a comprehensive course catalog rivaling a full traditional school curriculum. WISCA students have the benefit of controlling the pace of their learning and have choices in what they are studying. Choice is a powerful motivator for student learning.

At WISCA success is measured one student at a time. For many students, success means earning their high school diploma. Most students are still enrolled in their local brick-and-mortar school, which placed them at WISCA as their LRE. This means that students will graduate from their local school and earn the same high school diploma as their nondisabled peers. For some students, success may mean finishing all curriculum and going to college. Students also have the option for dual enrollment with a college. "Success is students having a really strong plan for what is coming next when they leave us," said Laus.

Endnotes

¹ Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) is the requirement in federal law under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) that students with disabilities receive their education, to the maximum extent appropriate, with nondisabled peers and that special education students are not removed from regular classes unless, even with supplemental aids and services, education in regular classes cannot be achieved satisfactorily.