

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.