CGRESD Online Learning Pilot Consortium Proposal

**Mission and Goal:** To provide students in the consortium districts with an online learning option that is locally controlled, is based on programs with proven success at CGRESD, and provides multiple layers of student support to ensure student success.

**Background:** The Seat-Time Waiver program did not lead to great success for many CGRESD students, and for-profit companies are attempting to lure students into fully online schools with mixed track records. Blended courses, however, have been very successful for first time credit, alternative education, and credit recovery at CGRESD. This is due in part to the connections made between students and their teachers.

**Program Summary**: The proposed program will give students seeking a section 21f online course a more reliable local option with transparent accountability. Students who are interested will need to apply electronically through a specially designed Moodle course that will assess their readiness for online learning. Two key personnel from local districts will assist students as they progress through the courses: A Local Mentor Teacher (a teacher from the student’s home district), and an Online Subject Area Teacher (a teacher from one of the local consortium districts, but not necessarily the same district as the student). The Local Mentor Teacher will be assigned to assist the student with the “soft skills” required for online learning, and will monitor student progress during the course. The Online Subject Area Teacher will be highly qualified for the subject area being taught and will be from one of the schools in the consortium. They will meet with the student, parents, and Local Mentor Teacher no later than one month after the course starts. The Local Mentor Teacher and Online Subject Area Teacher will be supervised by the Online Learning Coordinator, who will fall under the direction of the CGRESD Assistant Supt. for General Education.

Students who are interested and demonstrate the ability and motivation to learn online will be allowed to take one course, unless they have documented success in an online environment, in which case they could take up to two courses at once. An application process will be developed to determine readiness for online learning.

**Staff:** All program staff will be hired, trained, evaluated, and paid through Clare-Gladwin RESD. Mentor Teachers and Subject Area Teachers will all need to complete Teaching Online 101 in Moodle as well as one or more of the following:

* Blended Learning in the Classroom REMC course
* Post-graduate coursework in online learning
* Evidence of successful online teaching experience
* Complete Teaching Online 102 and 103 in Moodle.

All positions will be paid a stipend for each student they supervise, which will be above and beyond the normal duties of the individual. This could change if the program grows.

**Material**: Courses offered will use the online content purchased by the REMC Association of Michigan from Florida Virtual University and available at no cost through Moodle. Local district school boards will need to approve this content for first-time credit use. Start-up costs will include stipends for district teachers (preferably those interested in being Online Subject Area Teachers or Local Mentor Teachers) to access, review, and customize this content to ensure that it is in line with the approved curriculum. Once approved, this content could be used for the blended options mentioned above, including alternative education and credit recovery.

Completion will be defined as achieving 70% in the course.

Students will be allowed to take the course off-site only with the permission of their parents, the building administrator, and the Online Learning Coordinator. If a student falls behind (as defined by the Mentor Teacher or the Subject Area Teacher) in a class before the last 4 weeks of the term, they will be given one week to get back on track, or they will be required to report to the school for that period. If a student falls behind during the last 4 weeks of the term, they will be required to report to the school until the course is completed. Although the courses are designed to be self-paced, a student who does not finish before the end of the semester will have more than a full caseload the second semester, or be completing the course during the summer, when supports are more difficult to maintain.

Students who are on-site and finish coursework early will be required to stay on-site and continue learning online by choosing one of the following based on their interest: a Moodle course currently available that is not a credit bearing course, a career discovery course to be developed by the Online Learning Coordinator, or a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC- courses available from colleges and universities across the globe that are free of charge and give students an opportunity to try out a discipline they are interested in studying before putting their GPA or their tuition dollars on the line) approved by the Mentor Teacher.

Students who do not have a computer available outside of school will have the option of applying to borrow a CGRESD Laptop that is internet and Moodle compatible. This computer will be serviced through the CGRESD Helpdesk system during school hours, and immediately after school. Wired or wireless internet will also be provided for students without internet available, as needed.

**Costs**: Uses:

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| --- | --- |
| $1000 per district one-time payment | $100 per day stipend for teachers customizing courses x 5 subjects x 1.40 (Retirement and FICA)= $700 |
|  | Equipment $300 (Laptops and internet for students who show a need)- five computers to start. $400-$500 per laptop. Internet $30 per month. |
| $400 per ½ credit course per student | $125 to Subject Area Teacher of Record x 1.40 (Retirement and FICA)= $175 |
|  | $100 to Mentor Teacher x 1.40 (Retirement and FICA)= $140 |
|  | $85 for equipment and internet connections- year one. If the position of Online Learning Coordinator falls outside the normal duties of a CGRESD staff member in year two, this will transition to a stipend for the Online Learning Coordinator. |

The duties that fall under each position are as follows:

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Coordinator | Mentor Teacher | Subject Area Teacher |
| Communication with students | Weekly communication with Mentor Teachers and Subject Area Teachers | Communicate with each student weekly by phone, daily/as needed by email, and in-person at least bi-weekly. Communicate with parents monthly or as needed | Communicate with each student weekly by phone, daily/as needed by email, and through discussion boards weekly. |
| Moodle | Monitor teacher logins  Customize and refine courses | Monitor student logins  Customize and refine courses | Monitor student logins, manage course, collect and grade assignments  Customize and refine courses |
| Progress Monitoring | Monitor the progress of each student Monthly | Monitor the progress of each student weekly | Monitor the progress of each student weekly |
| Out of School Time Office Hours | None | Weekly on-call via phone  Email questions should be answered within 24 hours | Email questions should be answered within 24 hours |
| School Day contact method for parents and students | Phone or email | Phone or email | Phone or email |

**Evaluation**: Program evaluation will focus on student outcomes, supports, and communication. Moodle allows for collecting data on student progress, and completion records will be kept by the Online Learning Coordinator. This data will be used each semester to determine the completion rate for the program. The Mentor and Subject Area Teachers will keep contact logs that document phone and face-to-face communications and supports. Email communications will be stored electronically. Communication and support data will be compared to completion data during each semester to ensure that students are receiving adequate supports.

Surveys will be used during and after courses to gain student, parent, and teacher opinions on how the course was structured, which supports were most helpful, and if changes in the course are required. An exit interview will be completed by the Online Learning Coordinator over the phone with each student who completes the course. Teachers will be evaluated using a teacher evaluation rubric that follows all state and local laws and guidelines. Student achievement data will include survey data, completion data, and communication data.

**Timeline**:

May 2014- Approve Consortia Plan. Develop Online Learning Readiness Assessment

June/July 2014 – Hire and train Mentors and Subject Area Teachers. Customize 6 core courses with input from local teachers. Get courses approved by local district boards.

August 2014- Train all mentors and teachers before the start of the school year. Administer Online Learning Readiness Assessment and interview student candidates for the program.

September 2014- Enroll max 5 students per district in appropriate courses.

October 2014- Begin customization and development of additional courses.

November 2014- Prepare for second semester/trimester enrollment

December 2014- Conduct exit interview with students who have completed courses.

January 2015- Begin planning for 2015-16 school year, including estimated staffing needs depending on program needs. Once courses have been used successfully, transition credit recovery and alternative education online content to Moodle.

The following diagram shows the organization of the individuals involved:

