

Learn and Earn Online: A National Model of Innovation in PreKindergarten-20 Education

I. History:

Thanks to the support of Governor Beverly Perdue and the North Carolina General Assembly, public school students are earning dual credit for college and high school through Learn & Earn Online (LEO). The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction directed the North Carolina Virtual Public School (NCVPS) to coordinate the K-12 public school effort to support Learn and Earn Online. NCVPS is proud to support Learn and Earn Online as a part of the e-learning opportunities offered to North Carolina public school students. Since its inception in the fall of 2007, LEO has provided over 14,000 students with e-learning opportunities and college credit to prepare them to be future-ready, globally competitive citizens. LEO has experienced a 108% growth rate since last year.

II. What is Learn and Earn Online?

Learn and Earn *Online* is an extension of the face-to-face Learn and Earn program that allows students in public high schools throughout the state to earn college credit. This *Online* extension allows students in any school, in any county to take advantage of this opportunity. Qualified students in public high schools can take a variety of e-learning college-credit courses at no cost to them or to their families. Students earn both high school and college credit for completed courses. Access to these courses may be provided during the regular school day with an on-site course facilitator who will assist students in the classroom or independently. Courses are offered through both the University of North Carolina system, iSchool, and the North Carolina Community College System (NCCCS). The Learn and Earn Online Web site provides in-depth information about the program, offers video testimonials from students, lists courses available, and outlines specific requirements to take the iSchool and NCCCS courses. Visit the web site www.nclearnandearn.gov and look for the Learn and Earn Online tab.

III. What types of courses are offered?

- College courses in a variety of content areas.
- iSchool offers approximately 20 courses drawn primarily from the University's general education catalog. Course categories include human and behavioral sciences, foreign language, fine arts, economics, mathematical sciences, and global perspectives.
- NCCCS offers approximately 500 courses in art, biology, economics, English, chemistry, history, math, physics, psychology, technology, and other subjects from 48 participating Community Colleges.

IV. The Current Picture

From spring semester of 2008 to spring 2009, Learn and Earn Online has experienced 108% growth, shattering the annual 30% per year national growth projections supported by Harvard University Research (Christensen, 2007); The International Association for K-12 Online Learning – www.inacol.org ; and the

Southern Regional Board of Education www.sreb.org.

Enrollment trends since the program's inception are indicated in the table below:

	Registrations Fall 07	Registrations Spring 08	Registrations Fall 08	Registrations Spring 09
iSchool	1025	1632	2521	3293
NCCCS	396	1048	2010	2136
14061	1421	2680	4531	5429

In addition to the growth of the program, students are earning a composite grade point average of 2.6 and boasting a course completion rate of over 91%. In addition to these metrics, the Learn and Earn website (www.nclearnandearn.gov) provides student testimonials, best practices, and public information about registration and requirements.

The generosity of the legislature provides a Learn and Earn online budget of \$6.5 million recurring. iSchool is anticipating explosive growth and capacity of the program at present; more than 10,000 enrollments are anticipated for the coming academic year. Community College enrollment increases should become steeper as they work out systems issues with students having to apply to each Community College separately. High school students are becoming aware of the possibility of earning an Associate of Arts or Sciences degree by graduation. This awareness is increasing course registrations among 9th graders.

In September of 2008 North Carolina's Learn and Earn high school reform initiative received the 2008 Innovations in American Government Award. The Ash Institute sponsors the annual awards competition for Democratic Governance and Innovation at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government.

The program was selected from a pool of nearly 1,000 applicants to represent the best in Government Innovation on the local, city, county, tribal, state and federal levels. As a part of the award, North Carolina will receive \$100,000 toward the replication and dissemination of the program. To showcase each award winner, Harvard also has produced videos about the programs. Videos for all the award winners can be viewed at <http://www.youtube.com/user/AshInstitute>.

Established in 1985, the Innovations in American Government Awards Program is designed to improve government practices by honoring effective government initiatives and encouraging the dissemination of such best practices. Many award-winning programs are now replicated across policy areas and jurisdictions, serving as forerunners for today's reform strategies and new legislation. More information is available at www.innovationsaward.harvard.edu.

VI. SECTION 3.4. The Office of State Budget and Management may, after a request from the State Board of Education, provide from funds available in any agency in the budget up to one million dollars (\$1,000,000) for the 2008- 2009 fiscal year to the Department of Public Instruction for efforts to inform eighth- and ninth-grade students about opportunities to gain access to college and to college coursework.

These efforts should include, but not be limited to, strategies to ensure that parents, administrators, teachers, and students are fully informed about the Learn and Earn Online program, the Learn and Earn program, the UNC needs-based financial aid program, community college and UNC Online opportunities, and the EARN Grant.

The Department shall report no later than January 1, 2009, and June 30, 2009, to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee on the use of any funds provided under this section

Strategic Response to Section 3.4 : In an effort to expand the program's reach and additional planning grants for Learn and Earn for all North Carolina students the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction utilized (3.4) funds to expand and redesign the program's website to include more engaging Web 2.0 tools; the development of a comprehensive marketing approach; and finally the solicitation of bi-directional feedback and strategic input from the pre-kindergarten to graduate school (p-20) stakeholders in North Carolina via online tools and forums.

Video production, television spots, planning funding, training opportunities, virtual tools, and collaborative bi-directional wikis (or filing sharing websites) have been utilized to better inform administrators, teachers, and students of the potential impact of the Learn and Earn Online program.

Website banners, flyers, newspaper advertisements, radio spots, movie shorts, and billboards are also deployed in an ongoing basis across the state to ensure eight and ninth grade students and parents understand the full scope that Learn and Earn Online offer them. Finally, regional conferences, text messaging hubs, and space holders were developed on www.facebook.com, www.google.com, and www.yahoo.com as an ongoing part of the communications approach to reach the 21st Century user of LEO.

Learn and Earn Online will contribute during an upcoming GEAR UP summer conference to better inform administrators of the 20 middle and 45 high schools representing 16,000 students currently participating in GEAR UP across North Carolina. GEAR UP is a national initiative whose mission is to significantly increase the number of students who are prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary education. GEAR UP is funded through grants from the U.S. Department of Education. GEAR UP North Carolina works with students and their families in 20 of North Carolina's 100 counties. Beginning in 7th grade,

students are afforded opportunities to participate in exciting activities that prepare them to enter and succeed in college. "Learn and Earn Online has increased the number of participating students by 118% and expanded the number of schools included by 132% during the past year alone." (College Access Challenge Grant Annual Report 2009)

Distance Learning Advisors, identified and trained by NC Virtual Public School, are available in each North Carolina public high school. These individuals are a critical source of information and guidance for students interested in learning more or participating in Learn and Earn Online. Distance Learning Advisors provide a support system to ensure increased student participation and success.

The feedback from these efforts continues to be planned, vetted, and strategically detailed by the LEO collaborative group into action steps on a bi-monthly basis. This group is represented by K-12 and the Department of Public Instruction through the North Carolina Virtual Public School's Chief Executive Officer, Dr. Bryan Setser and Chief Learn and Earn Online Officer, Mrs. Deborah P. Pedersen. Mrs. Pedersen joined NCVPS on April 1 to coordinate efforts across the p-20 state partners. Also, represented on the LEO Collaborative Group are Dr. Beth Boyett, Director of School Partnerships for UNCG iSchool and Mr. Antonio Jordan, Director of Joint High School Partnership Programs for the North Carolina Community College System. Also, Dr. Fay Agar, Director of the NC Early College High School Initiative will also be joining the LEO collaborative group.

VII. Attachment A. Participation in Learn and Earn Online

All public high schools have the technical capacity to participate in Learn & Earn Online. Each high school or LEA determines participation. With the position of Chief Learn and Earn Online Officer now filled future reporting will provide more consistent data, such as Charter School participation which is now included by county. Below are Community College and iSchool participation data.

The table below indicates iSchool participation rates, representing the University of North Carolina, by county. Note that "n/a" indicates non-participation. While some systems were not participating in the fall semester, by spring 2009 there were two exceptions, Bladen and Caswell Counties.

iSchool Registrations by School Systems 2008-09		
LEA/County	Fall	Spring
Alamance-Burlington	26	36
Alexander County	10	13
Alleghany County	4	1
Anson County	23	27
Ashe County	0	0

iSchool Registrations by School Systems 2008-09

LEA/County	Fall	Spring
Asheboro City (Randolph County)	65	58
Asheville City (Buncombe County)	2	1
Avery County	3	4
Beaufort County	36	38
Bertie County	42	23
Brunswick County	25	59
Buncombe County	35	30
Burke County	4	36
Cabarrus County	74	72
Caldwell County	1	17
Camden County	2	1
Carteret County	2	3
Catawba County	92	140
Chatham County	18	16
Cherokee County	16	24
Clay County	0	3
Cleveland County	3	2
Columbus County	68	70
Craven County	12	4
Cumberland County	35	25
Currituck County	150	130
Dare County	23	28
Davie County	2	4
Duplin county	120	153
Durham County	22	21
Edenton/Chowan	43	58
Edgecombe County	0	0
Elkin City (Surry County)	0	0
Forsyth County	82	56
Franklin County	57	74
Gaston County	3	4
Gates County	n/a	1
Graham County	0	0
Granville County	n/a	35
Greene County	1	3
Guilford County	69	108
Halifax County	28	61

iSchool Registrations by School Systems 2008-09

LEA/County	Fall	Spring
Harnett County	10	9
Haywood County	n/a	3
Henderson County	39	41
Hertford County	n/a	12
Hoke County	n/a	2
Hyde County	n/a	2
Iredell-Statesville	44	48
Jackson County	n/a	3
Johnston County	25	69
Jones County	n/a	1
Kannapolis City (Cabarrus County)	22	24
Lee County	15	18
Lenoir County	86	83
Lincoln County	24	41
Macon County	1	1
Madison County	0	1
Martin County	2	9
McDowell County	2	37
Charlotte -Mecklenburg	98	80
Mitchell County	1	24
Montgomery County	28	107
Moore County	39	67
Mount Airy City Schools (Surry County)	n/a	1
Nash-Rocky Mount	67	101
New Hanover County	18	41
Newton-Conover Catawba County	12	30
Northampton County	15	6
Onslow County	0	5
Orange County	13	40
Pamlico County	7	3
Pasquotank County	0	2
Pender County	2	9
Perquimans County	34	31
Person County	6	12
Pitt County	14	6
Polk County	53	64
Randolph County	16	26

iSchool Registrations by School Systems 2008-09

LEA/County	Fall	Spring
Richmond County	15	15
Roanoke Rapids City (Halifax County)	7	15
Robeson County	26	30
Rockingham County	8	3
Rowan-Salisbury	0	21
Rutherford County	16	20
Sampson County	42	57
Scotland County	53	52
Stanley County	14	35
Stokes County	8	10
Surry County	40	47
Swain County	5	7
Thomasville City (Davidson County)	101	81
Transylvania County	0	15
Tyrrell County	0	1
Union County	112	146
Vance County	1	4
Wake County	68	71
Warren County	5	32
Washington County	28	21
Watauga County	23	16
Wayne County	24	47
Weldon City	8	0
Whiteville City (Columbus County)	0	1
Wilkes County	11	10
Wilson County	n/a	17
Yadkin	14	20
Yancey County	n/a	1
Total	2521	3293

The North Carolina Community College System reports Learn and Earn Online participation by Community College. Students taking courses might be in any LEA in North Carolina. The table below indicates NCCCS participation for spring semester 2009.

NCCCS Registrations by Community College Spring 2009	
Community College	Spring
Alamance CC	0
Asheville-Buncombe TCC	95
Beaufort County CC	0
Bladen CC	2
Blue Ridge CC	3
Brunswick CC	0
Caldwell CC & TI	4
Cape Fear CC	0
Carteret CC	4
Catawba Valley CC	8
Central Carolina CC	121
Central Piedmont CC	0
Cleveland CC	297
Coastal Carolina CC	0
College of The Albemarle	0
Craven CC	35
Davidson County CC	43
Durham TCC	0
Edgecombe CC	84
Fayetteville TCC	53
Forsyth TCC	0
Gaston College	158
Guilford TCC	4
Halifax CC	0
Haywood CC	0
Isothermal CC	108
James Sprunt CC	131
Johnston CC	24
Lenoir CC	92
Martin CC	0
Mayland CC	0
McDowell TCC	0
Mitchell CC	0
Montgomery CC	85
Nash CC	7

**NCCCS Registrations by Community College
Spring 2009**

Community College	Spring
Pamlico CC	0
Piedmont CC	32
Pitt CC	22
Randolph CC	3
Richmond CC	0
Roanoke-Chowan CC	0
Robeson CC	83
Rockingham CC	1
Rowan-Cabarrus CC	0
Sampson CC	13
Sandhills CC	41
South Piedmont CC	26
Southeastern CC	46
Southwestern CC	90
Stanly CC	0
Surry CC	0
Tri-County CC	138
Vance-Granville CC	104
Wake TCC	2
Wayne CC	175
Western Piedmont CC	0
Wilkes CC	2
Wilson TCC	0
Total	2136