

Educational Innovation at Hudson High School A Virtual High School Case Study

Virtual High School (VHS)

VHS is a non-profit collaborative of more than 300 partner schools throughout the U.S. and internationally that uses online education to expand learning opportunities for students and teachers. Our award-winning cooperative model is unique among online education providers and features over 200 innovative, student-centered courses that enhance curricula and meet nationally accepted standards.

VHS Supports Educational Innovation at Hudson High School– A Case Study

Hudson (MA) High School is a mid-size suburban school of over one thousand students. The student population is a diverse one both socio-economically and culturally. Almost one-third of the student body is of Portuguese descent with many new immigrants from Brazil, the Azores, Portugal and other countries entering each year. The school has a strong focus on academics and through a semester-based block schedule allows students to accelerate their instructional program and take advanced courses at local colleges while still in high school.

Hudson High School faces the challenge of expanding instructional offerings

Until Hudson High School joined VHS, instructional program offerings were limited to the talents of current faculty and courses that could obtain sufficient enrollment. The program of studies at Hudson High did not have the full complement of electives and Advanced Placement courses to enhance the school's core curriculum.

The Virtual High School solution

Hudson High School was one of the original twenty-eight high schools participating in VHS. Hudson has seen the VHS course catalog grow

from an initial twenty-eight courses offered in the 1997/1998 school year, to over 200 courses, including summer school, semester and year-long and middle school course modules. According to Dr. Sheldon Berman, Superintendent of Schools, "Now, with access to over 200 VHS courses, we have significantly expanded the curricular opportunities available to students to take advanced and specialized courses that are of interest to them. Now, not only do our students have access to our own faculty, but to talented faculty members and similarly interested students from across the country and even the world."

"Because of the high standards that VHS sets for rigorous course content and online instruction, we've been very comfortable offering students equivalent credit for VHS courses as for any major course at the high school."

VHS membership benefits

Dr. Berman believes that "We have seen many benefits from VHS. It has enabled us to maintain the sense of community one can achieve in a mid-size school while providing students with the richness of curricular offerings that not even the largest high school could provide. It has provided a technology-rich learning environment in which students became facile in using the Internet for online communication, presentation, collaboration, and research. It has expanded students' horizons as they interact with teachers and students from other areas of the country and the world. In fact, our alumni report that taking VHS courses not only provided content knowledge that enabled them to be more successful in college and work but that they learned to use technology in ways that put them well ahead of their peers."

VHS and Hudson High School help prepare 21st century students and teachers

The benefits have extended far beyond what Hudson High School had expected. Hudson's four VHS teachers have become technology leaders in the school, integrating online components into their regular courses and influencing other faculty members to use technology to advance instruction. The Hudson community better understands how technology can be used to effectively advance learning and has become more supportive of technology expenditures. Because Hudson also competes for students with surrounding districts through school choice and with area charter schools, VHS has helped Hudson High School create a reputation for quality and innovation. Hudson High is seen as a leading, innovative school with a rich array of challenging courses.

The Hudson Vision

Because the benefits of online learning have been so significant, school administrators at Hudson High School have set a goal of having every student at Hudson High School take at least one VHS course. Four teachers at Hudson High are currently offering courses through VHS and approximately one hundred students take VHS courses each semester. As a result, online learning has become an integral and cost-effective part of each student's education.

"I have known very few educational innovations that have had as significant an impact as VHS has had on the instructional program at Hudson High School. In fact, the more we have expanded our enrollment in VHS, the more wide scale the impact has been."

Dr. Sheldon Berman, Superintendent

How can VHS help your school?

Schools seek to expand learning opportunities for students and teachers, but with budget constraints it can often be a challenge. That's why VHS created a collaborative online learning model that helps schools implement the best online educational methodology in the country, boost curricula, and add online professional development opportunities for teachers at a fraction of the staffing and administrative costs needed to initiate the same programs independently. By partnering with VHS, schools have an affordable way to add:

- A unique global online learning and teaching environment
- Offer over 200 diverse, content-rich high school course offerings including Pre-Veterinary Medicine, Astronomy, American Popular Music, World Conflict: A United Nations Introduction, Pre-AP Statistics and AP Environmental Science
- Summer programs, Advanced Placement (AP), pre-AP and Gifted and Talented middle school courses
- Anytime, anywhere online learning
- Professional development courses for faculty in the best, most-respected online teaching methodology available

How do I find out more?

To arrange a consultation with a Virtual High School representative, please call 978-897-1900 or log onto www.goVHS.org/join



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