



What's Happening

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Online and distance learning in southwest Tennessee: Implementation and challenges

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Summary

The Southwest Tennessee Rural Education Cooperative (SWTREC) is a coalition of superintendents from 12 districts (half of which are rural) surrounding Memphis. This report presents the findings from an online questionnaire administered by SWTREC districts on the extent of and challenges to offering online and distance learning courses in their district high schools. The findings from SWTREC may be useful to other rural school districts interested in discovering possible opportunities and challenges of implementing their own online and distance learning courses.

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Summary

Members of the Southwest Tennessee Rural Education Cooperative (SWTREC), a coalition of superintendents from 12 districts (half of which are rural) surrounding Memphis, meet regularly to discuss challenges and collaborate on initiatives to improve students' college and career readiness. One area of concern is ensuring that students have access to courses that will prepare them for work or study following graduation. To offer opportunities not otherwise available to students due to staff limitations, scheduling constraints, and distance from higher education institutions, rural schools such as those in the SWTREC districts often use online courses (courses delivered primarily through the Internet using asynchronous instruction) or distance learning courses (courses delivered through audio, video, Internet, or other technology using primarily synchronous instruction originating from a location different from that of the students).

SWTREC members wanted to understand one another's online and distance learning offerings and to share resources across schools. By gauging the supply and demand for online and distance learning courses across SWTREC regions, SWTREC members could share courses across multiple partner districts. For example, rather than a district's paying for a world languages teacher to offer a course in a single school, the course could be shared with other districts through a distance learning platform.

This report presents findings on the extent of online and distance learning offerings in 2012/13 in SWTREC district high schools. Data for the study were collected through an online questionnaire administered by SWTREC districts in April 2013 and completed by one person from each participating school. District superintendents selected respondents based on their knowledge of online and distance learning offerings. Of the 21 high schools in SWTREC districts, 17 responded to the survey.

The following are the study's key findings:

- More than 80 percent of responding schools used online or distance learning courses in 2012/13.
- Of the 17 responding schools, 7 used both online and distance learning courses, 6 used online courses only, 1 used distance learning courses only, and 3 offered neither.
- Online courses were used more and had higher enrollments than distance learning courses.
- Schools that used online or distance learning did so primarily to offer dual enrollment, enabling students to enroll in a college or university and earn college credit while also enrolled in high school.
- Eighty-five percent of schools that offered online courses identified providing an opportunity for students to accelerate credit accumulation as a "very important" reason for offering the courses.

These findings may help SWTREC district leaders plan strategically for using online and distance learning courses to meet their students' education needs. Moreover, while limited to southwest Tennessee, the report also contributes to the limited research base on online and distance learning courses in rural school districts and could be useful to a wider audience interested in the opportunities and challenges of implementing online and distance learning courses.

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Why this study?

Administrators in small, rural districts use online and distance learning courses to provide students with course opportunities their schools could not otherwise offer (Picciano & Seaman, 2009). K–12 course delivery through online and distance learning technologies (box 1), on the rise over the past decade, can address common challenges facing rural schools, particularly lack of access to college-level offerings such as Advanced Placement or dual enrollment courses (Anderson & Chang, 2011; Levin, 2007).

Several factors contribute to the dearth of college preparatory classes in rural areas, including small student enrollments, limited financial resources, and challenges in recruiting and retaining teachers, particularly in math and science (Jimerson, 2006; Johnson & Strange, 2007; Picciano & Seaman, 2009). Students in rural schools also face transportation barriers to attending dual enrollment courses on college campuses.

This study explores online and distance learning course offerings at high schools in southwest Tennessee rural districts in 2012/13 that were members of the Southwest Tennessee Rural Education Cooperative (SWTREC). Superintendents and school administrators in these rural districts wanted to know more about the current use of online and distance learning across the region, the perceived need for such courses, and potential areas for expansion and collaboration across districts. The study findings may help district leaders in the SWTREC and other rural areas plan strategically for using online and distance learning courses to meet their students' education needs. Specifically, the report provides a frame of reference for the types of online and distance learning courses offered by rural districts, the reasons for providing the courses, and the barriers to their use.

The study findings may help district leaders in the Southwest Tennessee Rural Education Cooperative (SWTREC) and other rural areas plan strategically for using online and distance learning courses to meet their students' education needs

Box 1. Defining online, distance, and blended learning

Online, distance, and blended learning formats may be used to deliver dual enrollment courses (college-level courses for which students receive both high school and college credits), Advanced Placement courses, career and technical education courses, and courses in other academic areas.

Online courses:

- Are credit bearing.
- Are delivered primarily through the Internet using asynchronous (not simultaneous or “real time”) instruction.
- Are taken in school, at home, or in some other location.
- Can originate from within or outside the district.

Distance learning courses:

- Are credit bearing.
- Are delivered through audio, video, the Internet, or other computer-based technology using primarily synchronous (simultaneous or “real time”) instruction.
- Have an instructor in a different location from the students.

Blended learning courses:

- Are credit bearing.
- Combine online or distance learning with face-to-face learning.

The Southwest Tennessee Rural Education Cooperative

Established in 2010, the SWTREC is a coalition of 12 school districts surrounding metropolitan Memphis.¹ SWTREC members are superintendents from the constituent districts who meet monthly to improve academic achievement in the region's school districts, raise the region's level of educational attainment, and foster economic growth. Most SWTREC districts, classified as either "rural" or "distant town" within the urban-centric locale code system,² are far from urbanized areas (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2012). About 60 percent of students across the SWTREC districts are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch (an indicator that the students are from low-income households).

Online and distance learning in rural Tennessee districts

To prepare its high school students for college and workforce success, the SWTREC promotes college preparatory courses. One way to expand access to such courses is through online and distance learning courses.

Rural districts such as those in the SWTREC tend to offer fewer and less diverse courses than their suburban and urban counterparts (Picciano & Seaman, 2009). Online courses have enabled rural schools to expand their course offerings, particularly in advanced and college preparatory courses (Hannum, Irvin, Banks, & Farmer, 2009; Picciano & Seaman, 2009).

In 2006 the Tennessee Department of Education initiated an online learning program, Effective Engaging E-learning Environment for Tennessee (e⁴TN). The e⁴TN program allowed teachers to develop online courses aligned to Tennessee state standards. The program also provided professional development opportunities for teachers, training them to teach online courses. Operations of the e⁴TN program ceased after federal funding for the project ended in 2011 (Harris, 2012). Online learning is now a district responsibility in Tennessee, and districts can create standalone virtual schools or offer online courses from providers such as Florida Virtual School or North Carolina Public Virtual School. Tennessee's online course offerings include credit recovery, core academics, advanced academics, electives, Advanced Placement, and dual enrollment courses. However, the number, level, and variety of courses offered vary greatly across the state.

Not all courses are conducive to an online format. Another option is distance learning, with courses taught in one location and transmitted in real time to other locations. By allowing schools to pool teaching resources and share courses, this delivery method can be especially useful in rural schools that do not always have enough students to form a full class. If two (or more) schools share a course, students at both schools can take a class that neither school might otherwise have been able to offer. In the past few years schools in rural areas have had opportunities to receive distance learning equipment through the Distance Learning and Telemedicine Loan and Grant Program of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Development mission area.

Online courses have enabled rural schools to expand their course offerings, particularly in advanced and college preparatory courses

What the study examined

The following research questions guided this study:

- To what extent was online or distance learning used?
- What types of courses (Advanced Placement, dual enrollment, or high school credit only) did schools offer online or through distance learning?
- In what subject areas were courses offered through online or distance learning?
- How many online and distance learning courses used blended learning methods?
- What were the main purposes for which schools used online and distance learning courses?
- What did schools perceive as the barriers to offering online and distancing learning courses?

Surveys distributed by the SWTREC leadership to schools in all member districts were used to gather information for the study and to produce summaries of online and distance learning courses in 2012/13 (see box 2 for a brief description of the data and methods).

More than 80 percent of responding schools in SWTREC districts used online or distance learning courses in 2012/13

What the study found

More than 80 percent of responding schools in SWTREC districts used online or distance learning courses in 2012/13. Online courses were used more often and had higher enrollments than distance learning courses. Schools that did not offer online and distance learning courses reported technological limitations as the greatest barriers to offering online courses and lack of supervision for students as the greatest barrier to offering distance learning courses.

Schools used online or distance learning most frequently to offer dual enrollment courses: 89 percent of online courses and 66 percent of distance learning courses were dual

Box 2. Data and methodology

Data on online and distance learning courses came from responses to an online questionnaire distributed by the Southwest Tennessee Rural Education Cooperative (SWTREC) leadership to high schools in member districts. The questionnaire was originally designed for use in an evaluation of the Northeast Tennessee College and Career Ready Consortium and funded through the federal Investing in Innovation program. The Regional Educational Laboratory Appalachia modified the instrument for use in the SWTREC districts. The survey requests information about online and distance learning courses and the numbers of students enrolled in these courses. It measures enrollment at the course level, potentially leading to duplicate enrollment counts. The survey also asks respondents to rate the importance of reasons for offering courses and perceived barriers to expansion.

The questionnaire was distributed by the SWTREC leaders to high schools in April 2013, and 17 of the 21 high schools (81 percent) responded. The questionnaire was completed by the administrator, counselor, or other professional in each high school who was designated by the SWTREC leader as most knowledgeable on the topic.

Data on school characteristics such as size, rural status, and percentage of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch were obtained from the Common Core of Data (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics 2012).

The survey instrument is presented in appendix A.

enrollment courses. Providing students with an opportunity to accelerate credit accumulation was the most common reason for offering online courses.

The findings are discussed in more detail below.

More schools offered online courses than distance learning courses

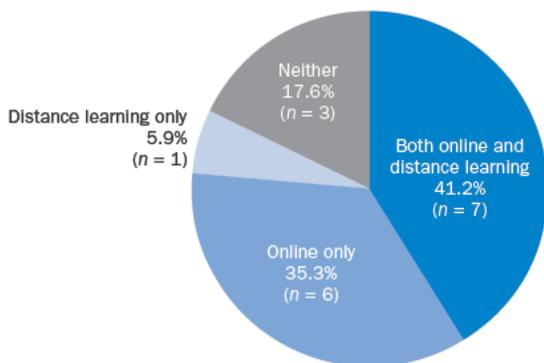
Across the 17 responding high schools in SWTREC districts, 7 (41.2 percent) reported using both online and distance learning courses, 6 (35.3 percent) used online courses only, 1 (5.9 percent) used distance learning courses only, and 3 (17.6 percent) used neither online nor distance learning courses (figure 1). Thus, three-quarters (41.2 percent + 35.3 percent) of schools used online course and nearly half (41.2 percent + 6.3 percent) used distance learning courses.

Although online courses were used more often than distance learning courses, average student enrollment across course types was comparable (table 1).³

The actual number of courses offered by each school varied (figure 2). Most schools offered at least one online course in 2012/13. In contrast, fewer than half offered distance learning courses.

Although online courses were used more often than distance learning courses, average student enrollment across course types was comparable

Figure 1. Three-quarters of responding high schools used online courses, and nearly half used distance learning courses in 2012/13



Note: Seventeen of twenty-one high schools responded to the survey.

Source: Authors' analysis of data collected through online questionnaire.

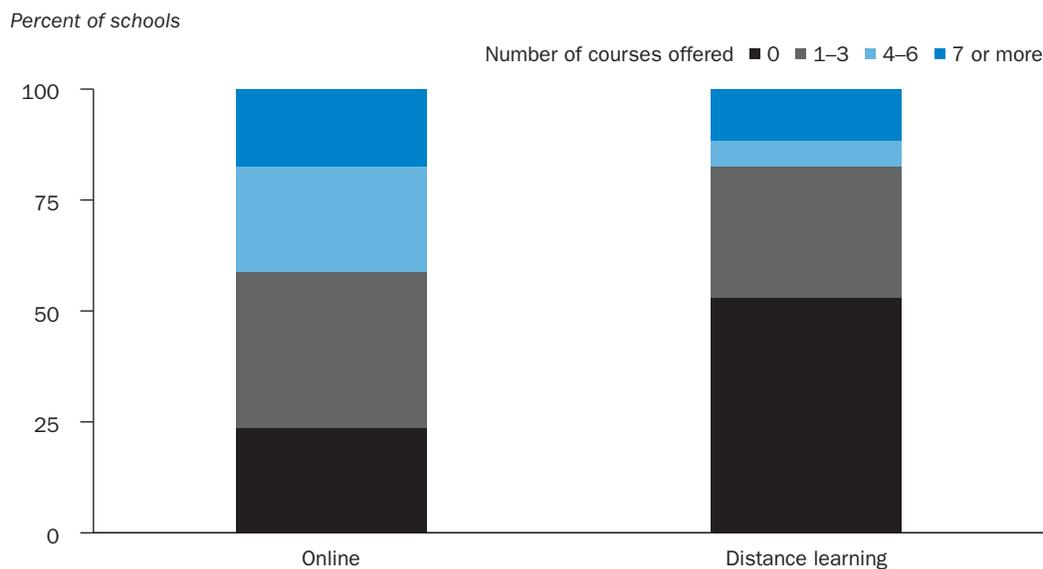
Table 1. Availability and use of online and distance learning courses in responding high schools in 2012/13

Finding	Online	Distance learning
Number of schools offering courses	13	8
Number of courses offered by all schools	63	29
Average number of courses offered by school	4.8	3.6
Average number of students enrolled in course	7	8

Note: Seventeen of twenty-one high schools responded to the survey. Enrollment is measured at the course level; students may enroll in multiple online and distance learning courses.

Source: Authors' analysis of data collected through online questionnaire.

Figure 2. Most responding high schools offered at least one online course, while fewer than half offered distance learning courses in 2012/13



Note: Seventeen of twenty-one high schools responded to the survey.

Source: Authors' analysis of data collected through online questionnaire.

Schools used online or distance learning most frequently to offer dual enrollment courses: all schools used online courses for dual enrollment and 75 percent used distance learning

Schools used online and distance learning courses primarily to offer dual enrollment

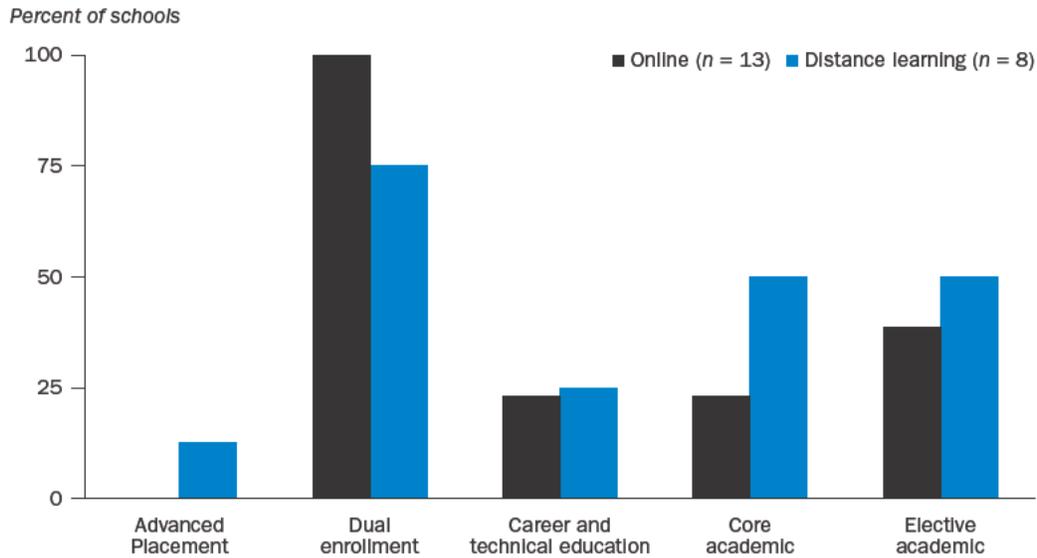
The online questionnaire asked respondents whether schools used online or distance learning courses to offer Advanced Placement, dual enrollment, career and technical education, core academic, or elective courses (figure 3). These course types are not mutually exclusive. For example, a career and technical education course might also be a dual enrollment course. For each course type, respondents selected either yes or no on the questionnaire.

Schools could use either or both delivery methods to offer a particular type of course. Online courses were more common than distance learning courses across all course types specified on the questionnaire. Schools used online or distance learning most frequently to offer dual enrollment courses: all schools used online courses for dual enrollment and 75 percent used distance learning. Some 89 percent of online offerings and 66 percent of distance learning offerings were dual enrollment courses.

Social studies and career and technical education courses accounted for the largest share of online courses, and English courses accounted for the largest share of distance learning courses

Course subjects differed by delivery method (figure 4). More than half of online courses were in social studies (U.S. history, psychology, sociology, personal finance, and world geography) and career and technical education (veterinary science, agricultural business and finance, and medical terminology). The largest share of distance learning courses (about a third) were in English.

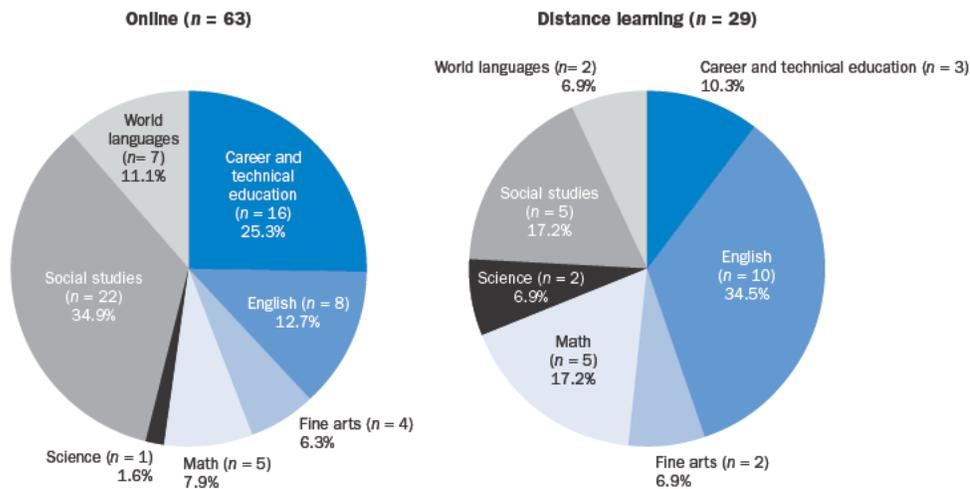
Figure 3. Dual enrollment was the most common type of online and distance learning course offered by responding high schools in 2012/13



Note: Seventeen of twenty-one high schools responded to the survey.

Source: Authors' analysis of data collected through online questionnaire.

Figure 4. More than half of online courses in responding high schools were in social studies and career and technical education, and most distance learning courses were in English and math in 2012/13



Note: Seventeen of twenty-one high schools responded to the survey.

Source: Authors' analysis of data collected through online questionnaire.

Blended learning was more common in distance learning courses than in online courses

Blended learning, which combines traditional face-to-face instruction with online or distance learning, was not widely used: 11 percent of online courses and 24 percent of distance learning courses included face-to-face learning (table 2).

Table 2. Blended learning was used less often than online or distance learning courses alone in responding high schools in 2012/13

Subject	Online courses				Distance learning courses			
	Solely online		Blended		Solely distance learning		Blended	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Career and technical education	16	100	0	0	3	100	0	0
Fine arts	4	100	0	0	2	100	0	0
Math	5	100	0	0	3	60	2	40
Science	1	100	0	0	1	50	1	50
World languages	7	100	0	0	0	0	2	100
Social studies	18	82	4	18	5	100	0	0
English	5	63	3	38	8	80	2	20
Total	56	89	7	11	22	76	7	24

Note: Seventeen of twenty-one high schools responded to the survey.

Source: Authors' analysis of data collected through online questionnaire.

Ninety-two percent of schools offering online courses rated providing students with an opportunity to accelerate credit accumulation as a very important reason for offering online courses

Schools used online courses primarily to accelerate students' credit accumulation

The questionnaire asked respondents to rate a list of reasons for offering online courses as “not important,” “somewhat important,” or “very important” (table 3). The reasons were not mutually exclusive, and respondents could select multiple reasons. Ninety-two percent of schools offering online courses rated providing students with an opportunity to accelerate credit accumulation as a very important reason. Seventy-seven percent rated offering dual enrollment courses and providing courses not otherwise available at the school as very important reasons.

Schools used distance learning primarily to offer dual enrollment courses

The questionnaire also asked respondents to rate a list of reasons for offering distance learning courses as “not important,” “somewhat important,” or “very important” (table 4). Seventy-five percent of schools offering distance learning rated offering dual enrollment

Table 3. Schools offering online courses most often rated accelerating credit accumulation as a “very important” reason for offering the courses in 2012/13

Reason for offering online courses	Number	Percent
Providing opportunities for students to accelerate credit accumulation	12	92
Providing courses not otherwise available at the school	10	77
Offering dual enrollment courses	10	77
Reducing scheduling conflicts	6	46
Providing opportunities for students who are homebound or have special needs to take courses	4	31
Offering Advanced Placement courses	2	15
Addressing school space limitations	2	15

Note: Results are shown only for the 13 of 17 schools that offered online courses.

Source: Authors' analysis of data collected through online questionnaire.

Table 4. Schools offering distance learning courses most often rated offering dual enrollment courses as a “very important” reason for providing the courses in 2012/13

Reason for offering distance learning courses	Number	Percent
Offering dual enrollment courses	6	75
Providing courses not otherwise available at the school	4	50
Providing qualified instructors for courses	4	50
Offering Advanced Placement courses	2	25
Providing opportunities for students who are homebound or have special needs to take courses	2	25

Note: Results are shown only for the 8 of 17 schools that offered distance learning courses.

Source: Authors’ analysis of data collected through online questionnaire.

courses as a very important reason. Fifty percent rated providing courses not otherwise available at the school and providing qualified instructors for courses as very important reasons.

Schools not offering online courses cited limited technology as a very challenging barrier

The questionnaire asked respondents to rate 11 potential barriers to providing or expanding access to online courses as “not challenging,” “somewhat challenging,” or “very challenging” (table 5). The reasons were not mutually exclusive. The barrier most commonly rated as very challenging (65 percent) was the cost of courses.

Most schools that did not offer online courses identified limited technology to support courses as a very challenging barrier. Most schools offering online courses identified the cost of courses as a very challenging barrier to expanding their online offerings.

The barrier to providing or expanding access to online courses most commonly rated as very challenging was the cost of courses

Table 5. Schools offering online courses rated cost as the greatest barrier in 2012/13, and schools not offering them rated limited technology as the greatest barrier

Barrier to offering online courses	Offered online courses (n = 13)		Did not offer online courses (n = 4)	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Cost of courses	10	77	1	25
Students find online courses are more difficult than they expected	5	39	1	25
Lack of supervision (proctor) for students taking courses	4	31	1	25
Student difficulty/uneasiness with taking online courses	4	31	1	25
Limited technology to support courses (computer or lab space available)	3	23	3	75
Lack of student interest in online courses	3	23	0	0
Difficulty obtaining student progress or grade reports	3	23	0	0
Lack of technical support for online courses	2	15	1	25
Questions about the rigor or quality of courses	1	8	1	25
Lack of teacher interest in teaching online courses	1	8	0	0
Difficulty registering students for courses	1	8	0	0

Note: Seventeen of twenty-one high schools responded to the survey.

Source: Authors’ analysis of data collected through online questionnaire.

Table 6. Schools offering distance learning courses rated limited periods when technology was available as the greatest barrier in 2012/13, and schools not offering them rated lack of supervision for students as the greatest barrier

Barrier to offering distance learning courses	Offered distance learning courses (n = 8)		Did not offer distance learning courses (n = 9)	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Limited period when technology (either distance lab or computers) is available	4	50	2	22
Difficulty obtaining student progress or grade reports	3	38	0	0
Scheduling conflicts with other schools	2	25	2	22
Difficulty forming partnerships with other high schools	2	25	2	22
Difficulty forming partnerships with colleges	2	25	1	11
Lack of supervision (proctor) for students taking courses	2	25	3	33
Limited technology to support courses	2	25	2	22
Problems offering distance learning courses in the past	2	25	1	11
Student difficulty/uneasiness with taking courses at a distance	1	13	1	11

Note: Seventeen of twenty-one high schools responded to the survey.

Source: Authors' analysis of data collected through online questionnaire.

Half of schools offering distance learning courses rated limited periods when technology is available as a very challenging barrier

Schools not offering distance learning courses cited lack of supervision for students as a very challenging barrier

The questionnaire asked respondents to rate a list of potential barriers to providing or expanding distance learning course offerings (table 6). Thirty-three percent of schools not offering distance learning courses and 25 percent of schools offering such courses rated lack of supervision (proctor) for students taking courses as a very challenging barrier. Half of schools offering distance learning courses rated limited periods when technology is available as a very challenging barrier.

Implications of the study

Online and distance learning courses offer rural schools a means of exposing students to a diversity of courses they might not otherwise have access to. Schools in the SWTREC used online courses more frequently than distance learning courses. Technological limitations—both in the availability of technology and the restricted periods when technology is available—were barriers that schools perceived in offering online and distance learning courses. Schools with online and distance learning courses used them primarily as a way to offer students accelerated credit accumulation and dual enrollment courses, respectively. These findings can help other rural districts plan for the anticipated challenges and opportunities of implementing online and distance learning courses in their own districts.

Limitations of the study

The findings pertain to a small region in southwest Tennessee. And although the response rate to the online questionnaire was 81 percent, not all SWTREC districts were represented. One district has no high schools, and in three other districts none of the high schools responded to the survey.

The study findings should be viewed as starting points for further investigation of how and why online and distance learning courses are implemented among rural Tennessee high schools.

Appendix A. Survey instrument

This appendix contains a copy of the online questionnaire that was distributed to the Southwest Tennessee Rural Education Cooperative member schools.

Survey on online and distance learning courses

This survey is conducted by the Southwest Tennessee Rural Education Cooperative (SWTREC). It should not take more than 30 minutes to complete.

Your participation in this survey is important. This survey quantifies the use of technology to bring courses to rural areas through online, blended, and distance education. It applies to a variety of settings, including middle schools, alternative high schools, and traditional high schools. Results will inform SWTREC members as they expand use of online and distance education programs to improve student access to high quality education. Results can inform:

- Cross-district collaboration
- Cooperative-wide professional development and training
- Pursuit of funding for additional expansion

It will ask about your school's access to and use of online courses during the 2012/13 school year, for both the fall and spring semesters.

In this survey we define online courses as follows:

- Online courses are delivered primarily via the internet using asynchronous (not simultaneous or “real time”) instruction.
- Online courses may be taken by students in school, at home, or in some other location. The online format can be used for courses in Advanced Placement, dual enrollment, career and technical education, or other content areas.
- Online courses can originate from your district or from other entities (such as, a state virtual school, another district, a postsecondary institution, or some other provider).

If a course uses a combination of distance learning, online learning, and/or face-to-face, “real time” instruction, it is often called “blended learning” or “hybrid learning”. This survey will ask about the mode of instruction for individual courses.

In this survey we define distance learning courses as follows:

- Distance learning courses are credit bearing.
- Distance learning courses have an instructor that is in a different location from the students.
- Distance learning courses use technology-delivered via audio, video, the Internet, or other computer-based technology.
- Distance learning courses are primarily synchronous (simultaneous or “real time”).
- Distance learning courses may be Advanced Placement, dual enrollment (college level courses for which students receive both high school and college credits), career and technical education, or other academic courses.

Please provide contact information in case there is a need for clarification or follow up.

1. Name of school:

2. Grade levels served by this school:

3. Name of person completing this survey:

4. Telephone number:

5. Email address:

This section of the survey asks about use of online courses in the 2012/13 school year.

Online courses

- Are delivered primarily via the internet using asynchronous (not simultaneous or “real time”) instruction.
- Can be taken by students in school, at home, or in some other location. They can be Advanced Placement, dual enrollment, career and technical education, or other content areas.
- Can be offered through providers such as district virtual schools, state virtual schools such as FLVS, Odyssey-Compass Learning, and postsecondary institutions.

6. During the 2012/13 school year, were online courses used at your school to offer:

	Yes	No
Advanced Placement courses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dual enrollment courses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Credit recovery courses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Career and technical education courses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Core academic courses (such as English, Math, Science, Social Studies)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Elective academic courses (such as Sociology, Psychology, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

7. If students at your school want to take online courses, do they have access to a computer lab or laptop computers during the school day to do so?

- Yes
 No

8. Do students access online courses at school, at home or both?

- School
- Home
- Both
- Neither; we do not offer any online courses

9. In the table below, please list the course code, course name, course provider, and number of students at your school who were enrolled in each online course during the 2012/13 school year. If there are multiple sections of the same course that use different course providers or modes of delivery, please each section on a separate row.

Tennessee course code	Course name	Course provider	Number of students at your school enrolled in the course	Purely online or hybrid/blended

10. Does your school track progress in online courses during the semester?

- Yes
- No

11. Does your school track course completion for online courses?

- Yes
- No

12. Does your school track final course grades for online courses?

- Yes
- No

13. Does your school track withdrawals from online courses prior to course completion?

- Yes
- No

14. How important are the following reasons for offering online courses at your school?

	Not important	Somewhat important	Very important
Providing courses not otherwise available at the school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Offering Advanced Placement courses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Offering Dual Enrollment courses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Providing opportunities for students who are homebound or have special needs to take courses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reducing scheduling conflicts for students	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Providing opportunities for students to accelerate credit accumulation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Addressing school space limitations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

15. How challenging are the following barriers in terms of expanding or implementing online courses at your school for your students:

	Not challenging	Somewhat challenging	Very challenging
Lack of student interest in online courses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lack of technical support for online courses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lack of teacher interest in teaching online courses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lack of supervision (proctor) for students taking courses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Limited technology to support courses (computers or lab space available)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Questions about the rigor or quality of courses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student difficulty/uneasiness with taking online courses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cost of courses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Difficulty registering students for courses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Difficulty obtaining student progress or grade reports	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Students find online courses are more difficult than they expected	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

16. Does your school plan to offer any online courses in the 2013/14 school year?

- Yes
- No

This section of the survey asks about use of distance learning courses in the 2012/13 school year.

Distance learning courses

- Are credit bearing.
- Have an instructor that is in a different location from the students.
- Use technology-delivered via audio, video, the Internet, or other computer-based technology.
- Are primarily synchronous (simultaneous or “real time”).

Distance learning courses may be Advanced Placement, dual enrollment (college level courses for which students receive both high school and college credits), career and technical education, or other academic courses.

17. During the 2012/13 school year, were distance learning courses used at your school to offer:

	Yes	No
Advanced Placement courses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dual enrollment courses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Credit recovery courses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Career and technical education courses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Core academic courses (such as English, Math, Science, Social Studies)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Elective academic courses (such as Sociology, Psychology, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

18. Does your school have a distance learning lab?

- Yes
- No

19. Can students use laptop computers to take distance learning courses at your school?

- Yes
- No

22. Please rate the following barriers to implementing or expanding distance learning course offerings in terms of how important they are as they apply to your school and students:

	Not important	Somewhat important	Very important
Scheduling conflicts with other schools	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Difficulty forming partnerships with other schools	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Difficulty forming partnerships with colleges	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lack of supervision (proctor) for students taking courses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Limited technology to support courses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Limited periods when technology (either distance lab or computers) is available	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student difficulty/uneasiness with taking courses at a distance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Problems offering distance learning courses in the past	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Difficulty obtaining student progress or grade reports	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

23. Does your school plan to offer any distance learning courses in the 2013/14 school year?

- Yes
- No

Thank you for taking the survey.

Notes

1. Chester, Decatur, Fayette, Hardeman, Hardin, Haywood, Henderson, Lauderdale, Lexington, Madison, McNairy, and Tipton.
2. The National Center for Education Statistics defines a rural town as a territory inside an urban cluster that is more than 35 miles from an urbanized area and a distant town as a territory inside an urban cluster that is more than 10 miles and less than or equal to 35 miles from an urbanized area (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2012).
3. Multiple sections of a course can be offered, but the sections are counted as one course if they have the same course code.

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