



Virtual High School Global Consortium Overview

Virtual High School Global Consortium (VHS) is a non-profit cooperative of over 400 national and international member high schools offering full-semester and year-long online courses. VHS offers a wealth of unique elective, core, technical, Advanced Placement and Pre-Advanced Placement level courses.

VHS Mission

The mission of Virtual High School is to develop and deliver standards-based, student-centered online courses to expand students' educational opportunities and 21st century skills, and to offer professional development to teachers to expand the scope and depth of their instructional skills.

We strive to bring innovative, high-quality online high school courses to students, no matter their location and to provide schools with the means to meet singleton needs, by overcoming student scheduling challenges. Currently, there are over 200 full-semester and year-long online courses in the VHS course catalog. Some of the courses offered include *Advanced Placement courses, Mandarin/Chinese, American Popular Music, Latin I, Career Awareness for the New Millennium, Sports and American Society, and Introduction to English Language and Composition (pre-AP level course)*. All VHS courses are taught by certified secondary teachers by each of the schools participating in the VHS cooperative. Through these Internet-based VHS courses, schools can significantly enhance their curricular offerings, and at the same time integrate technology skills development into their academic curriculum.

How is VHS Unique?

- VHS is the only K-12 online course provider that operates through a cooperative model. By partnering with schools, VHS is able to offer over 200 credit-bearing courses to member schools.
- VHS has been providing teacher professional development in online course design and instruction to high schools nationwide since 1996 and student-centered courses since 1997.
- VHS does not replace schools' curriculum offerings; the VHS philosophy is to work with schools to provide supplemental courses that otherwise would not be available.
- VHS is setting the standard for online methodology and pedagogy and was recently recognized by the USDLA and Blackboard for its innovative program and high-quality course design. **The VHS online design and delivery standards are in alignment with the NEA recommended standards for online teaching and learning.**
- Courses are delivered by certified instructors and move forward on a weekly calendar schedule so students cannot finish a semester in four weeks. VHS course design standards ensure that all courses have a high level of peer-to-peer interaction so students learn from their peers as well as their instructor. Our asynchronous schedule enables students from around the globe to participate in working groups and class discussions.
- Students gain a global perspective. Member high schools are from around the globe which results in course enrollment that is highly diverse. Imagine...it is possible that a class could have students from multiple countries representing different cultures, different educational experiences and varied socioeconomic backgrounds. These experiences prepare students for learning and working in a global community.
- VHS partners with schools to provide courses to the cooperative. **Each VHS teacher is highly qualified to teach a VHS course. Teachers enroll in either 10-week or 22-week online professional development where they learn how to deliver or create an online course.** After completing the VHS professional development the teacher is assigned a VHS mentor to monitor and provide feedback during the teacher's first semester of teaching online. Upon successful completion of training, teachers can earn between 6-12 graduate credits.

How the VHS Cooperative Model Works

The collaborative includes schools from 29 states and 23 countries, averaging nearly 10,000 students per year. Each member school hosts a course to the cooperative by having a teacher teach an online course. The VHS instructor is released by their school for one period a day to teach the online VHS course. In exchange, their school is able to register a certain number (based on membership options) of students in any of the over 200 online courses.

About VHS Teachers

Member high schools select a faculty member who is certified in the discipline of a VHS course. The teacher receives online training in how to teach a VHS online course effectively. Teachers may enroll in either Netcourse Instructional Methodologies (NIM) OR Teachers Learning Conference (TLC).

- NIM is a 10-week online professional development course that teaches classroom teachers how to deliver a pre-existing VHS course. A teacher can receive 135 professional hours plus 6 graduate credits for an additional fee upon successful completion.
- TLC is a 22-week online course that instructs teachers in how to develop an online course, as well as how to deliver the online course. A teacher can receive 270 professional hours plus 12 graduate credits for an additional fee upon successful completion.

About VHS Site Coordinators

Member schools also provide a site coordinator who acts as a local onsite VHS administrator, guidance counselor and technical support adviser for students enrolled in VHS courses. The site coordinator communicates the VHS program to students and parents, monitors students' progress and communicates with the VHS support team. The site coordinator is required to complete Site Coordinator Orientation (SCO), a four-week online professional development course that teaches how to monitor students' progress, receive and report student grades, and how to recruit and register students.

About VHS Courses

Courses emphasize problem-based learning, group work and authentic assessment. Course elements include critical thinking and student-centered activities such as small group activities, peer-to-peer interactions, multi-media presentations, and class discussions. Courses are instructor-led and follow an asynchronous weekly interval calendar. Average course size is 21 students and will not exceed 25 students.

Performance Metrics

- 80% of students taking VHS courses successfully complete their course.
- VHS Advanced Placement (AP) exam pass rate of 66% compares favorably to national AP exam rate of 60%.
- 76% of students taking a VHS course receive a C or better.
- 79% of VHS teachers apply what they learn in their VHS online professional development to their face to face classroom.

Accolades & Recognition

- USDLA 2005 & 2007 21st Century Award for Best Practices in Online Technology and K-12 Education. USDLA 2005 Award for Online PreK-12 Programming Excellence, Gold Recipient.
- VHS and Forks High School *Poetry Writing* course selected as winner of Blackboard's Bbionic Course Contest™ 2005
- VHS is a winner of the 2001 Stockholm Challenge Award for Global Excellence in Information Technology – an international competition that recognizes the benefit information and communication technology can bring to people and society.
- VHS is a winner of the American School Board Journal's Magna 2000 Award for exemplary use of technology in education.
- VHS is currently working with the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO) to offer a pilot offering of the IBO's first online courses. All VHS core subjects meet NCAA initial-accreditation standards.

**For more information about Virtual High School please contact a VHS representative at 978-897-1900.*