

# Kingsway Regional School District



## ***A Blended Learning Pilot Proposal: Plan for Innovation of Course Modalities to Cultivate Personalized Learning Opportunities***

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***Committed to Excellence***

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## Introduction

Kingsway Regional School District acknowledges both a need and an opportunity to provide personalized learning for students via an expansion of digital learning modalities. This proposal aims to create learning experiences, design environments, and cultivate mindsets that are responsive to the interests, strengths, and needs of individual students. This endeavor presents multifaceted challenges including uniting stakeholders with a common understanding of the goal and the best path forward, updating physical and technical infrastructure, designing new learning modalities and resources, and building the capacity of educators to take on new roles and new approaches to classroom instruction.

Kingsway’s investment in a learning management system and supporting educational technologies must be “accompanied by thorough consideration of other instructional components such as the design of effective learning experiences.”<sup>1</sup> The universal presence of technology in our society requires educators to constantly seek an expanding knowledge base with the various educational technology tools in order to evaluate, select, and effectively implement technology in a public school setting with the goal of improving access to high quality learning experiences and positively impacting student achievement. Schools are swathed in technology, but “integrating technology” refers to a process where instruction and teachers are not replaced by technology, but occurs when instructors leverage technology to transform effective instruction.



When implemented well, blended/virtual learning options give teachers an opportunity to transform the educational experience for student’s individual educational needs — to meet the needs of a broader group of learners, individualize instruction, and transform education for everyone. Promoting, designing, and delivering high-quality academic experiences in virtual/blended classrooms can meet the needs of special populations of students in order to prepare all students for college and career.

## Implementation of Pilot

The proposed pilot takes effect in September 2021 and will apply to students entering grades 11 and 12. Kingsway is committed to expanding existing educational offerings by crafting blended learning and virtual educational opportunities to lead this transformation. With any change, it is critical to remain grounded in the principles and standards of excellence upon which Kingsway prides itself. Blended learning and virtual courses will maintain personal connections and afford students a newly designed, collaborative work space – the KRHS Learning Lounge, located in one of the high school media centers. Relationship building will remain a hallmark of courses at Kingsway, regardless of the modality of instruction.

Course scheduling and availability will be based on a variety of factors, including but not limited to student need, staffing, scheduling, grade level, and budget.

The following items may require adjustment:

- Program Planning Guide *with inclusion of blended and virtual course formats and student profile*
- Senior Flex Privilege
- Guidance Counselor Preparation for Course Selection Meetings *to identify and counsel students in the selection of blended and/or virtual course formats*

## **A Roadmap for Innovation: Kingsway's Virtual Program Phase In**

A multi-year plan considers the integrated parts of the district and how they will work together to harness the opportunities of our virtual program.

### **Fall 2020 - Winter 2021: Phase I – Vision and Planning**

A strict focus on drafting a framework and vision from which to innovate and prepare our school community for future virtual educational opportunities is required and prudent foundational work. A plan for the continued integration of educational technology, budgetary planning, an investigation of successful, public school virtual programs, and an effective webpage for communication will ground a multi-year effort to develop Kingsway's Virtual Program.

### **Spring 2021 - Summer 2021: Phase II – Building Capacity**

This phase is reserved for strategic professional development, nurturing buy-in, and collaborating with all stakeholders to build a common understanding of the district needs and goals with respect to furnishing a Virtual Program.

### **September 2021- June 2022: Phase III – Virtual Program Pilot**

The pilot year of the virtual program seeks to offer five virtual course offerings at the high school; possible courses identified in conjunction with the Chief Academic Officer, Director of Guidance, Director of Virtual Learning and Instruction, and the Superintendent of Schools. Evaluate pilot course offerings via teacher interviews, student surveys, and focus groups including a variety of stakeholders.

### **September 2022- June 2025: Phase IV – Virtual Program Opening and Expansion**

Kingsway's Virtual Program opens in September 2022, with an increase of course modalities offerings each year to reach a full complement of original credit graduation requirements, continuous learning courses, home instruction, and credit recovery options offered in online and blended learning formats throughout the school year and over the summer.

## **Policy Changes**

No policy changes are recommended to implement this pilot.

## **Course Modalities**

New, digital course modalities will continue to support G.R.E.A.T. instruction, and components addressing curriculum planning, motivation, instructional strategies, and managing learning. Kingsway plans to pursue a wider variety of course modalities in an effort to address the following immediate and long-term needs:

1. Reduce scheduling conflicts and address demand for courses with limited seats to afford students greater opportunities for acceleration and enrichment via enrollment in graduation requirements, AP courses, and elective options




"I have also to envisage that the education system is going through a profound change. This change started well before COVID-19. The pandemic simply accelerated the process. In my view, (this) will help young teachers and not so young to realize that education is entering, or already did, a new era and teachers need to adapt to our new life as e-educators. Of course, I would prefer to see my kids face-to-face, but for their own good and future, they need to take part in all these transformations and get used to it. After all, their future depends on how fast and how well they will fit in e-education."

- *Dr. Kamal Benslama,*  
*Kingsway Regional High School Physics Teacher*

2. Accommodate remediation and enrichment needs through instruction for unique student needs (i.e. deliver homebound instruction, support drop out recovery, continue instruction to suspended students, allow failed courses to be retaken, provide credit recovery/make-up courses)
3. Capitalize on innovative learning tools realized and nourished throughout the 20-21SY
4. Supplement face-to-face courses with new opportunities for students to engage in active, self-paced learning experience
5. Extend learning in-school and out-of-school through flexible environments and project-based learning
6. Provide summer enrichment and tutorial courses for students interested in extended learning opportunities, such as accelerated math courses, and SAT prep courses

All courses offerings, regardless of format, align to the New State Learning Standards and/or the AP College Board Course Guide and Standards. Additionally, each course leverages Kingsway’s curricula, built and vetted by Kingsway teachers and delivered via our learning management system, Schoology.

**Table 1**  
Course Modality Definitions & Markers

Marker	Modality	Definition
	<b>In-Person</b>	Traditional classroom learning environment with in-person instruction designed to engage students at regularly scheduled intervals within the during the school day as per the SMART schedule
	<b>Blended</b>	Flexible learning environment with a combination of synchronous (in-person or video conference instruction) and asynchronous (virtual or offline independent study) designed to engage students in active learning providing students with more control over the time, place, pace, and path of their learning  <i>*scheduled during the school day; balance of classroom instruction versus asynchronous time will vary from student to student, as determined by the teacher and based on individual student need</i>
	<b>Virtual</b>	Primarily asynchronous, personalized learning environment delivered via Schoology in digital course format; Self-paced, independent learning with opportunities for teacher feedback via office hours (any combination of phone, virtual meetings, and in-person meetings)  <i>*scheduled outside of the school day; a minimum of one live weekly check-in is required</i> <i>*For advanced credit and/or Home Instruction only</i>

Our research includes a variety of factors relevant to blending and virtual learning opportunities with the power to positively impact the student learning experience. These considerations include, but are not limited to:

- Learner-centered student opportunities for self-paced, **personalized learning**
  - Personalized learning marries research-based pedagogical practices rooted in traditional instruction with the purposeful infusion of digital instructional resources leading to

- improved student engagement and actionable feedback from teachers to drive learning forward with a goal of meeting individual student needs
- For the last seven years, Denver Public Schools has adopted a blended learning and reports “the self-directed learning paths offered by blended learning enabled teachers to respond to students at the point of need, either virtually through the computer-based lessons they’d created or directly in the classroom setting.”<sup>2</sup>
- When learners are entrusted to take ownership of their own learning, a 41% increase in skills was realized in one pedagogical study examining the impact of teaching self-monitoring.<sup>3</sup>
- Eliciting increased study time and **better-quality effort** from students given 24/7 access to learning activities and flexible timelines
  - In a recent student survey given to all Kingsway Regional School District students, a sophomore Honors student shared, “*Definitely, I work best on asynchronous days and when teachers give us the whole plan for the week. So, then I could start working on future day assignments...and I can get done school work earlier to relax and not stress.*”<sup>4</sup>
- **Preparedness** for college course in the light of the ubiquity of online learning in higher education
  - A decade ago, 31% of college students reported taking at least one fully online class as part of their course load.<sup>5</sup>
  - In 2014, more than 70% of higher-education academic leaders surveyed agreed that online learning is critical to their long-term strategy.<sup>6</sup>
  - According to the National Center for Education Statistic, by Fall 2018, there were nearly seven million students enrolled in distance education courses at degree-granting postsecondary institutions. With at least 20% of undergraduate students taking at least one online course each semester and 14% of college students exclusively enrolled in online courses.<sup>7</sup>
- Added **flexibility** for student and family schedules with late arrival and early dismissal flex privileges for juniors and seniors enrolled in at least one blended and/or virtual course
  - Denver Online High’s “Do More” initiative (Denver Public Schools) celebrates student accomplishments toward college and career, while providing others the opportunity to pursue their dreams of the Olympics to equestrians and figure skaters to fashion designers – all made possible by opening the door to blended and virtual courses<sup>8</sup>

Since September 2020, two Kingsway Regional High School student focus groups, held on October 7 and November 24, revealed the following consensus from the group of student leaders across all four grade levels:

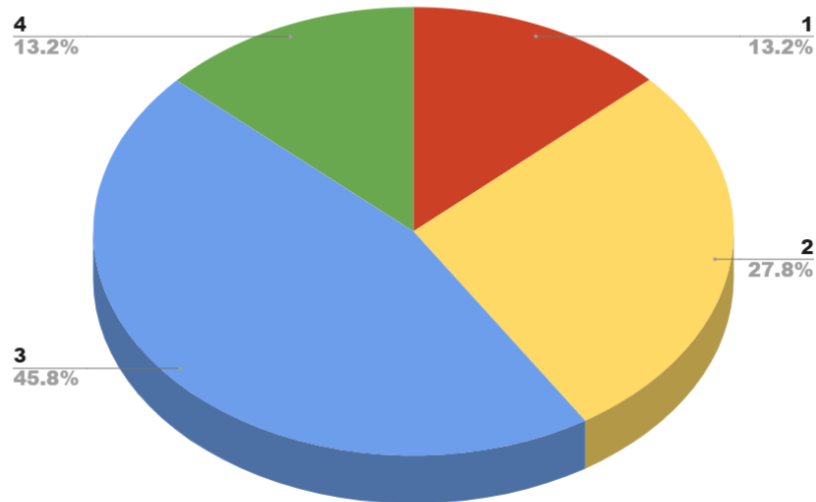
- In the virtual learning environment, the ratio of 3:2 synchronous to asynchronous instructional tie strikes a balance, meeting the needs of a variety of learners, and affording students the fundamental opportunity to manage their time and pace their own workload, and thereby learning.
- Students compared the availability of Office Hours to the SMART enrichment period accessed in a typical school year. Blended and virtual course students will maintain teacher access during SMART.

A nearby Pennsylvania, Delaware Country School District, Garnet Valley, offers an *E-School Program* with a full complement of courses. One Garnet Valley parent offered insight and perspective on the introduction of blended and virtual courses as “a comfortable learning environment without distractions and the teachers are always anxious to help.” Another Garnet Valley E-School parent stated, “I imagine it is a great fit for many kids for different reasons. It was exactly what we needed at the time and I am grateful that it was even an option.”<sup>9</sup>

**Chart 1**

**KRSD Virtual Learning Student Survey, January 7, 2021<sup>4</sup>**

Virtual Learning Student Survey (Q10): On a scale from 1 to 4, where 1 is Struggling/Failing and 4 is Thriving /Excelling. Overall, during virtual learning, how would you rate your learning experience?



Additionally, on January 7, all Kingsway students, grades 7 through 12, were provided with a Virtual Learning Student Survey. Overall, 59% responded positively to their overall learning experience with virtual instruction.

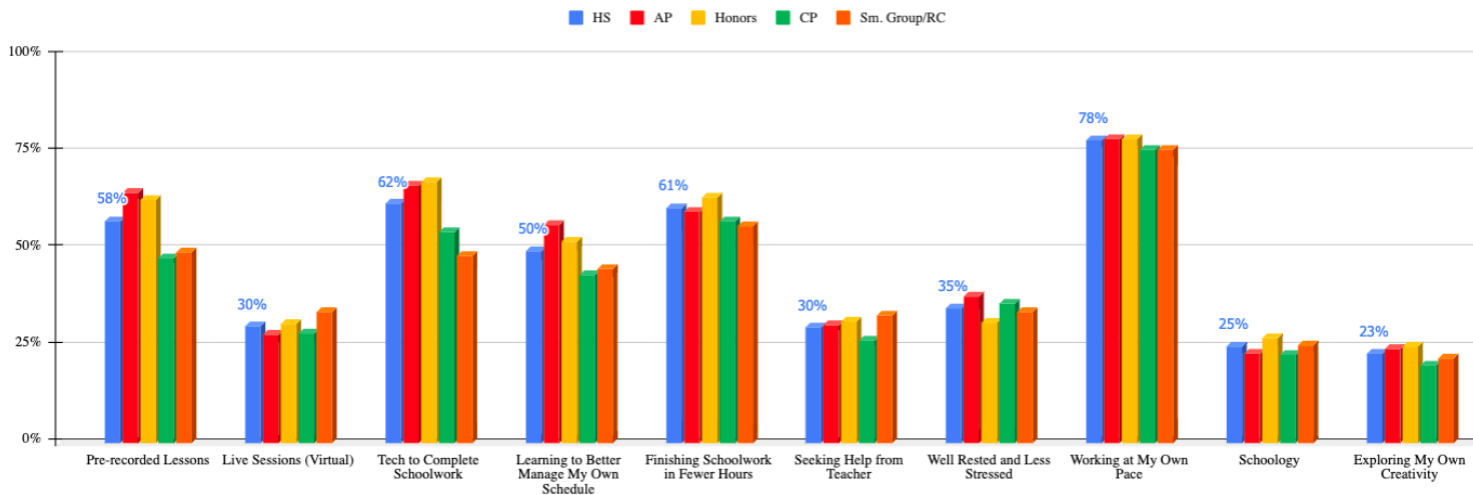
Data from the January student survey also revealed the following affirmative trends related to what high school students report as “working well” during virtual learning:

- Working at my own pace (78% of students)
- Using technology to complete and submit school work (62% of students)
- Finishing my school work in fewer hours, so I can spend time doing other activities that interest me (61% of students)
- Pre-recorded lessons give me flexibility to do my school work when it worked best for me (58% of students)
- Learning to better manage my own schedule (50%)

**Chart 2**

KRSD Virtual Learning Student Survey, January 7, 2021<sup>4</sup>

Virtual Learning Student Survey (Q1): During virtual learning, what is working well for you?



According to a November 2019 meta-analysis published in Educational Research Review, synthesizing 114 studies from 2006 through 2016, it was concluded “students in flipped classrooms achieve significantly higher assessed learning outcomes than students in traditional classrooms, and are equally satisfied with the learning environment.”<sup>10</sup>

The collection of the above evidence outlines a small body of research examining the potential benefits of offering blended and virtual courses to our Kingsway Regional High School students with the goal of expanding and enriching our course offerings to accommodate a variety of student needs.

**Pilot Course Recommendations**

Courses offered within the disciplines of Social Studies and English are identified as practical options for the pilot year. An expansion of the Virtual Program in future years aims to include a greater variety of original credit courses at all levels, offered in fully online and blended learning formats throughout the school year and over the summer.

**Table 2**

Recommended Pilot Courses

Department	Course	Grades	Credits
Social Studies	Advanced Placement Psychology	11-12	1.0
	Advanced Placement United States History II	11-12	1.0
	Honors United States History II	11-12	1.0
English	Advanced Placement English IV Lit & Comp	12	1.0
	Honors English IV	12	1.0
	College Prep English IV	12	1.0

\*Blended and virtual course formats are only available for juniors and seniors.

## Characteristics of a Blended or Virtual Program Student

With the freedom and flexibility of enrolling in blended and/or online courses, comes added personal student responsibility. The learning process in any class format requires commitment and discipline to meet success; pursuing blended learning or online learning demands time management, independent study skills, motivation, perseverance, academic readiness, and technical skills.

Students must be a junior or senior during the 2021-2022 school year and should have the following characteristics (or be willing to work on them) if they desire to participate in a blended and/or virtual course offering at Kingsway Regional High School.

*Learner Profile adapted from [College Values Online](#), [Central Michigan University](#), [Indiana Online Profile of a Successful Online Learner](#), and [North Carolina Virtual Characteristics of a Successful Online Learner](#)*

# PROFILE OF A SUCCESSFUL VIRTUAL LEARNER

- 1 SELF-MOTIVATED**  
Do you have a strong desire to learn skills, acquire knowledge, and fulfill learning activities?
- 2 STRONG TIME-MANAGEMENT SKILLS**  
Can you create and maintain a study schedule and meet deadlines for schoolwork?
- 3 INDEPENDENT STUDY HABITS**  
Can you maintain self-discipline to complete learning activities and study without direct supervision?
- 4 EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATOR**  
Do you ask for help, make contact with your teacher or other students, and describe any problems you have with learning materials?
- 5 ACADEMICALLY READY**  
Do you have the academic skills and satisfactory grades to succeed in the class?
- 6 TECHNOLOGICALLY PREPARED**  
Are you comfortable in a "virtual environment" and able to use Schoology, email, Google Drive sharing, send attachments, and participate in online discussions?

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One Kingsway Regional High School, Senior Honors student explains, *"Personally, some pre-recorded lessons that were posted before by some of my teachers gave me the opportunity to make time to discover my own creativity. I worked at my own pace and could even finish my school work in a few hours, and then I could pick up some extra shifts at work."*<sup>4</sup> Blended and virtual course offerings provide students with the ability to hone time management skills and oversee their daily schedule, while still prioritizing learning. The January student learning survey revealed 56% of all AP students see learning to better manage their own schedule as a positive outcome of this school year's virtual learning environment.<sup>4</sup>

Students pursuing virtual course offerings must be focused, prepared and pro-active. While students in fully virtual classes interact with their teacher and their classmates, much of the learning is initiated by the student when he or she logs into a Schoology course, engages with learning materials, thoroughly reads discussion board posts and composes responses, undertakes assignments with fidelity, and studies for assessments.

For more details related to student expectations, responsibilities, and support, see [Blended and Virtual Learning Course Selection: A Conversation Guide for Students, Parents, and Counselors](#).

## Effective Digital Design and Master Courses

Adapting to the current trends in education with the intention of fostering learning anywhere and anytime mandates access to tools and resources for all teachers and students. A cohort of teachers, including those teaching pilot courses in the 2021-2022 school year, will be trained to present content and create lessons



designed to foster interactive student learning experiences using effective digital design. This wave of professional development and digitization of courses will spur our initial population of Kingsway’s blended learning community. Dr. Susan Enfield, Highline Public Schools’ Superintendent (Washington State), offers an essential take away from the district’s *Future Ready* strategic plan to integrate technology and support digital learning to drive personalized instruction, “First, invest in teachers as innovators who can lead the way and set the direction for the district, as well as serve as models for their peers.”<sup>11</sup>

Once courses, including those outside of the pilot offerings, are designed and reviewed by an instructional supervisor, they may serve as **master course** templates available for all teachers delivering instruction in any course modality. This one piece of the puzzle involved in a systematic approach to build teacher capacity for personalized learning as it provides structure for teachers to collaborate and create courses to better personalize learning for all students. For each lesson within the master course, teachers may choose to:

- (1) “Plug and Play” - Keep the course as is; adjust the title and course nomenclature to fit the course modality and student learning schedule.
- (2) “Tweak It” – Add and/replace course material, learning activities/assignments, and/or assessments synonymous with master course materials. Perhaps a teacher is not yet comfortable with Pear Deck, so that resource may be substituted with a Google Slides presentation the teacher created in a previous year. Likewise, a teacher has a preferred video on biological bases of behavior and includes it to enhance the student learning experience.
- (3) “Replace It” - A lesson may not fit a teaching style or the instructional needs of the current student roster, in which case a teacher may choose to make something from scratch.

### **Piloting Course Modalities to Cultivate Personalized Learning Opportunities**

Our school system has been and continues to pursue opportunities to improve academic student program as a means to support children and their development as contributing citizens. Kingsway Regional School District’s strategic plan promises excellence and opens with a quote from Oliver Wendell Holmes, “**Greatness is not in where we stand, but in what direction we are moving.**”

“While DPS does not believe in “silver bullets” that will propel every student to success, we do believe that one innovation – technology-enabled, data-driven, personalized learning – holds tremendous potential to drive dramatic gains in student learning. We have seen the difference technology can make in many other sectors of our economy. And recent advances in personalized-learning software have great potential for targeting instruction for each student, increasing learning opportunities, and extending learning time. Technology will never replace teachers; it will only help make them better.

Our challenge is to pilot some of these new blended classroom and instructional models, see what works best, and see how some of these new learning software approaches integrate best into our schools. Using technology to accelerate and deepen learning is complex, requires careful planning and implementation, and necessitates tight and coordinated collaboration across many stakeholder communities, each contributing their unique perspectives and expertise.”

- Tom Boasberg, Superintendent, Denver Public Schools<sup>2</sup>

This proposal aligns with Vision 2019: Promising Excellence<sup>12</sup>; more specifically with goals one and six which speak to Kingsway's commitment to design individualized learning experiences and to integrate technology to transform instruction to benefit our students.

Strategic Plan: Goal 1

We will continue to design academic experiences that prepare all students for college and career.

*Strategic Priority 1.1*

Individualize teaching and learning through implementation of differentiated instructional techniques in the classroom.

Strategic Plan: Goal 6

We will increase student interaction with technology throughout the learning process.

*Strategic Priority 6.3*

Develop and expand virtual communities and online learning to connect classrooms.

Furthermore, this proposal is rooted in the obligation to perpetually seek improvement within our school system and paves a pathway for expanded course offerings based on the needs of our student population.

## Endnotes

- 1 Dick, W., Carey, L., & Carey, J. (2014). Systematic Design of Instruction (8th Ed.), Pearson.
- 2 [Innovating For Excellence: How Denver Public Schools and Janus Are Transforming Education In Denver](#). Denver Public Schools (2013).
- 3 Schunk, D. H. (1982). Progress Self-Monitoring. The Journal of Experimental Education, 51(2), 89–93.
- 4 Kingsway Regional School District Virtual Learning Student Survey. (1/7/2021)
- 5 [Going the Distance: Online education in the United States](#). Babson University (11/2011)
- 6 [Grade Level: Tracking Online Education in the United States](#). Babson Survey Research Group (February 2015)
- 7 [Fast Facts: Distance Learning](#). National Center for Education Statistics (2018)
- 8 [Do More](#). Denver Online High, Denver Public Schools (2020).
- 9 [Delco High School is Pioneering a Choice to Learn At Home, At School — Or Both](#). Philadelphia Inquirer (8/3/2018)
- 10 David C.D. van Alten, Chris Phielix, Jeroen Janssen, Liesbeth Kester. [Effects of flipping the classroom on learning outcomes and satisfaction: A meta-analysis](#). Educational Research Review (2019).
- 11 [Creating a Safe Space for Innovation](#). Highline Public Schools, a Future Ready Case Study (2017)
- 12 [Kingsway Regional School District Strategic Plan](#). (2019)

## Additional Resources

[Characteristics of an Online Learner](#). Central Michigan University (2020)

[Garnet Valley School District e-School Student Manual](#) (2020-2021)

Miller, M. (2014). Minds Online., Harvard University Press.

Mormando, S. & Brun, K. (2019). [A Systemic Approach to Building Teachers’ Capacity for Personalized Learning](#). ISTE Conference.

[Profile of a Successful Online Learner](#). Indiana Online (2020)