



The Pillar of Achievement

The four pillars at Hope Online – Attendance, Affiliation, Achievement and Aspiration – guide us as we begin a new calendar year.

Achievement is in the forefront as the seeds sown by the Instructional Team continuously yield milestones of learning progress. We know our students well; therefore, we serve them well through intensive curriculum alignment, frequent and thoughtful professional development, rigorous academic expectations and improved parent communication.

Curriculum Concepts

We tailor our curriculum so that it better meets the needs of our students. To accomplish this, we rely on the collaboration and talents of many individuals. Teachers work in teams to design lesson plans that utilize online and offline assignments. They develop curriculum in core subjects, as well as English Language Learning (ELL) and Individual Career and Academic Plans (ICAP) for students. Every content area has designated learning targets formulated from core concepts and articulate learning progression goals for the entire school year. These are measured by four performance assessments developed to track student progress and pacing.

Learning Center staff members are trained in core reading instruction, expectations and strategies. In addition, targeted skills are regularly reinforced among teachers and mentors to maximize outcomes for students. Reading status reports for each student are reviewed bi-weekly and follow up is coordinated among teachers, mentors and parents.

Initiating students' introduction to life goals after high school graduation, Hope Online has invested in ICAP modules for grades 6-12 to encourage career and academic planning concepts in English and Spanish.

Professional Preparation

Recognizing that promoting achievement among students entails more than excellent curriculum, professional development this year is focused on core academics and challenges to learning.

Hope Online teachers are trained in Acuity benchmarking and report analysis so that data results drive student learning. Data reports enable teachers and Learning Center staff to monitor progress and strategically implement action plans throughout the school year. Also, a math content efficacy study formed the basis for training in key mathematic concepts and learning progressions.

Professional development training this year has touched on specific learning strategies for second language learners and the expectations of the Hope Online RtI Process. However, professional development of late has prioritized our Behavior Instructional Improvement Guides program. The BIIG program encompasses instruction on positive behavioral strategies and techniques for classroom management. The trainings are facilitated by designated trainers in five regions; four of the six modules are completed, and the remaining two will be conducted this spring.

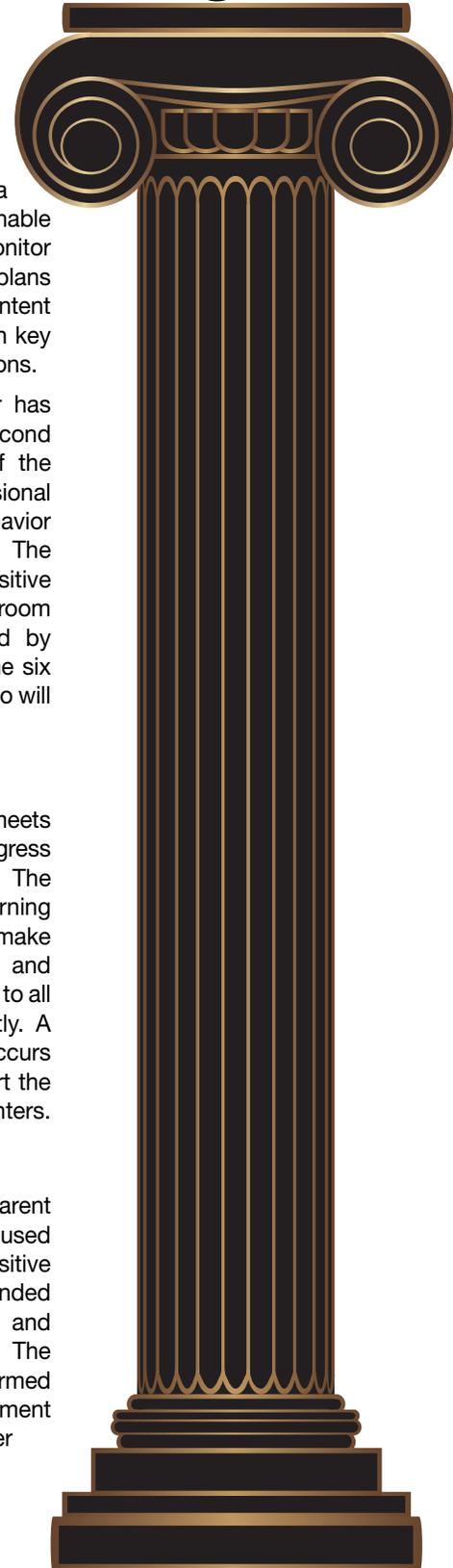
Accountability Action Steps

The Hope Online Advisory Committee meets every six weeks to monitor the overall progress and implementation of our performance plan. The Instructional Team consistently supports Learning Centers determined to help students make academic gains. Literacy block standards and tools, as well as measurements for adherence to all curriculum requirements, are utilized constantly. A Learning Center directors' leadership forum occurs on professional development days to support the growth of skills and vision for all Learning Centers.

Collaborative Communication

A critical component for achievement is parent involvement. Therefore, Hope Online has focused on increasing parent contact with a very positive upturn in the past several months. Our expanded Parent Survey was available in English and Spanish and in paper and electronic versions. The Hope Online Advisory Committee brainstormed extensively regarding enhanced family involvement and shared ideas with Learning Center directors. All Learning Centers now host at least four family activities during the school year. The planned Hope Online Family

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Greetings from the Chief Executive Officer



Once again, second semester shines the spotlight on where we have been and where we are going. Once again, I am delighted with the consistent trend of our students' achievements:

- 54% of Hope Online's students were measured by Acuity in Tiers 3 and 4 in Spring 2011, compared to 45.9% in Fall 2010.
- 54.4% of Hope Online's k-3rd grade students were measured by DIBELS to Level CORE skills in Spring 2011, compared to 47% in Fall 2010.
- All of Hope Online's Class of 2011 graduates were prepared for college courses, as indicated by their Accuplacer score, a Hope Online graduation requirement.
- Approximately 70% of Hope Online's students from 2010/2011 re-enrolled in Hope Online for the 2011/2012 school year.

With pride, I remind you that these achievements are the result of the cooperative relationships among Hope Online's educational experts, motivated teachers, Learning Center directors, mentors and parents. They reinforce the educational partnerships which are vital to our blended online learning model. Though success is more than a number, these achievements also solidify our commitment to students whose educational foundation continues to expand in scope and depth.

In this issue, we share the valuable insight of several Hope Online team members. One parent shares about volunteering in the classroom, while another reflects on her positive experiences as a mentor. You will also hear from three veteran Hope Online teachers, and our school counselor describes the

inroads that are being made through the Individual Career and Academic Plan, otherwise known as ICAP.

Our Learning Center Highlight captures the spirit at Cherry Creek Online Learning Center, where students from many neighborhoods are drawn in by the Learning Center's dedication to meeting the needs of students. Additionally, the perspectives of two experienced Learning Center leaders and two delightful students with successes of their own provide more evidence of the team power that supports student achievement.

Finally, Hope Online's chapter in a forthcoming book to be published by the International Association for K-12 Online Learning (iNACOL) confirms our role in the national conversation about education and is highlighted in these pages.

As you read about a few of the many voices, hands, hearts and skills that are the foundation for the educational growth of Hope Online students, know that your efforts are making a difference as we continue to move in the right direction of positive change.

Sincerely,
Heather O'Mara
Chief Executive Officer



College Readiness: What is ICAP?

Hope Online students recently learned about two keys to their future success. One is their Hope Online School Counselor, Kristie Richardson. The other is their Individual Career and Academic Plan (ICAP).

ICAP is a student roadmap to success. As its name indicates, it is all about career and education, but it is definitely not "one-size-fits-all." The word "individual" in ICAP ensures Hope Online students, from middle schoolers to seniors, the opportunity to plan for their own distinct future achievements!

As with any plan, it takes hard work and dedication to make it happen. However, Ms. Richardson emphasizes, "Our students have the advantage of already being online."

Why is that an advantage?

For most students, logging in to the CollegelnColorado.org website to create an ICAP account must be done apart from their studies as an extra task. But Hope Online students can easily log in at school from their workstations and begin reading about existing college and career opportunities, filling out questionnaires about their skills, taking interest surveys and finding resources to support their dreams.

Additionally, only Hope Online students have Ms. Richardson to personally assist them with passwords and guidance through the start-up process. She has already visited Roca Fuerte Learning Academy, three Front Range Academy sites, Center of Hope Academy, Tetra



*Hope Online School Counselor
Kristie Richardson*

Academy, LARASA Learning Center and may be on her way to your Learning Center soon.

"It is wonderful that our students' thinking is shifting from 'I can't go to college' to realizing that there are actually resources to help them get there. Having a plan with steps and goals makes all the difference."

Once they establish a CollegelnColorado.org account, there are monthly activities to help keep them focused on those goals. Learning

Centers receive facilitator handbooks to continue guiding and encouraging students on a regular basis. The handbooks cover a variety of topics, explaining important steps related to college and career success.

For example, in fall, students document their personal history and interests to help them establish fundamental goals. Next, they identify careers that fit their goals and interests. Younger students explore general careers while older students begin working on a resume and conduct college and training research. Students see that future education and training opportunities are definitely attainable.

By the end of the academic year, older students understand the importance of budgets and how to apply and interview for jobs as part of their long-term planning. Step by step, students see that success is a journey that they can begin today.

Parent Partnerships

Hope Online students are surrounded by a learning community of teachers, mentors and parents eager to help them achieve. And, those closest to them – their parents – are in a pivotal position to nurture their success. Hope Online values the participation of parents as important allies on each student's journey of academic achievement.

Some parents make a distinct contribution through enthusiastic support of Learning Center leadership. Many parents regularly respond to feedback from Hope Online teachers and classroom mentors. Their follow up efforts include communicating about students' progress, offering critical assistance with homework and reinforcing good study habits at home. Still others volunteer and even become mentors. Whatever their interest, one thing is clear – Hope Online definitely encourages the essential involvement of parents.

Ms. Beverly McGaughy is a dynamic parent volunteer at Hope Online's Victory Academy in Denver. Her weekly presence in the classroom assures that every student receives extra doses of one-on-one attention, whether in the form of affirmation, review of instructions or reading help. Even when correcting a child's behavior, Ms. Beverly's kind voice and tone inspire improvement. Her own daughter, Mecca, is just one of the students who seem to flourish in the presence of this well-loved parent volunteer.



Ms. Beverly with Sammonne

"They say that the more parents participate, the better the student does, and I believe that. My being here is good for my daughter and all the other children too."

Once disheartened when her older daughter was singled out and labeled at a local school, Ms. Beverly shares her new perspective on being noticed for individuality.

"I knew that I wanted a school where there was patience and care for her individual needs. Here, children are singled out in positive ways to identify and respond to their needs. As a parent, I see that my daughter is challenged, that she loves it and that she is so inspired. The computers add excitement too. Hope Online is a model school for the community. I see how Mecca has come to appreciate her own abilities as well."

At All Peoples Learning Center in Colorado Springs, Moriee Dooley, now a mentor, echoes a similarly passionate perspective about being a Hope Online parent.



Ms. Moriee

"I was amazed at how well informed I was as a parent, which made a big difference," Ms. Moriee notes. "Now that I am a mentor, I also see why students 'get it' here. We can work with students for longer periods of time to explain technical terms in more detail or work through reading challenges right away."

Ms. Moriee points out another factor that enhances the blended learning environment for Hope Online students – the flexibility of many ways to learn the same concept.

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Lessons Learned in Teacher Mentoring: Hope Online Co-Founders Author Book Chapter

A new book, *Lessons Learned in Teacher Mentoring: Supporting Educators in K-12 Online Learning Environments*, to be published later this year by the International Association for K-12 Online Learning (iNACOL), will include a chapter authored by Hope Online co-founders Joyce Gietl and Heather O'Mara.

The theme of the book, teacher mentoring – thought of as the guiding, coaching and collaborating of teachers with peers and instructional experts in order that they may be part of a continuous, professional learning community and ultimately become more effective teachers – is common to many in education. However, with a recent rise in online teaching, this iNACOL publication will find new territory, asking the question – how is teacher mentoring applied for online teachers?

The opportunity to share the school's history and pioneer mentoring work is a tribute to the Hope Online Instructional Team. Their enthusiasm for and commitment to teacher mentoring, the cornerstone of Hope Online's learning model, will be highlighted in this international publication. Understanding that "a student is more influenced by his assigned teacher than by any other factors" (Darling-Hammond and Youngs, 2002), Hope Online's journey of developing excellent teachers through mentoring portrays a strong case for the practical methods proven effective at Hope Online.

The chapter will further explain how successful strategies dramatically increased teacher retention at Hope Online, despite the rigorous demands of serving students online and at multiple Learning Center locations.* Through the Hope Online Teacher Induction Program, new teachers are assigned a mentor with a Masters Degree in education, appropriate tenure and a demonstrated ability to collaborate. Their mentor guides them in professional development, individual mentoring and a reflective process.

Hope Online utilizes a variety of resources to support new teachers and classroom mentors. Mentoring opportunities include immediate, task-based support, experience-based mentoring with a specific expert, just-in-time assistance for unanticipated needs, one-to-one and team mentoring as well as formal expectations mentoring. A variety of sources are pooled together to fill the gaps of any individual technique, and the ongoing counseling often becomes the basis of teacher workshops and professional development topics to the advantage of all teachers – not just the new.

Mentoring also yields higher levels of content knowledge and professional development among Learning Center mentors, resulting in a positive cycle of mentoring on several levels. These facts are all the more impressive in the context of Hope Online's students who are "decidedly challenged... with intense learning gaps, high mobility or significant drop-out risk factors..." around whom the school maintains a child-centered teaching model.

Subscribing to Wong's 2004 assessment that "teachers remain in teaching when they belong to professional learning communities that have, at their heart, high-quality interpersonal relationships

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Denisee works diligently on math problems



Cherry Creek Online Learning Center Director Ms. Laurie Griffith



Sharky and Oscar take a snack and reading break

Serving Many Neighborhoods: Cherry Creek Online Learning Center

“Our team,” “our students,” “our families” are words often heard in conversations with Cherry Creek Online Learning Center Director Laurie Griffith. In the classrooms at 200 S. University Boulevard, these priorities are evident.

With word of mouth recommendations from one family to the next spreading across Denver neighborhoods, classrooms at Cherry Creek Online are full. Despite their diverse backgrounds, these students share camaraderie – they enjoy learning together in this happy community.

Guided by their mission to “provide an outstanding academic school choice with excellence to a diverse population in a friendly, caring and safe atmosphere,” Cherry Creek Online staff members give precedence to student success in all their decisions.

“Our measuring tools are more than just academics,” points out Ms. Griffith. “We also consider our enrollment and staff retention to gauge our productivity. If we are meeting student needs, families are happy and return. With staff stability, we spend more time focused on students, not on re-training.”

Ms. Griffith further explains that, in a blended learning environment, consistency is especially important. “Our model meets the needs of our students in such unique ways that the learning curve for mentors is very steep. Our staff is unrelenting in our quest to find the right resources for students. Whereas, in other environments, the student has to adapt to the method, we foster innovation and do whatever it takes, online or offline, to help students connect with a concept in order to advance. Sometimes this requires that preconceived ideas are re-directed toward more innovative approaches with the help of Hope Online resources.”

“Hope Online provides us with educational expertise, through our Hope Online teacher, specialists, staff and many resources,” Ms. Griffith continues. “It is wonderful that, at any given moment, I can pick up the phone and have assistance. We could not do it without them.”

“Another example of our unique approach can be seen in our monthly staff meeting set aside to brainstorm solutions to specific learning gaps of individual students. In this think tank environment, every staff member’s experience and expertise is focused on solving specific problems, not theoretical scenarios. Acclimating to our problem-solving culture, in which no stone is left unturned, ultimately enhances the skills of our mentors, but it takes time.”

Mentor Brandy Ferguson enjoys the opportunity to be inventive. “We try new, research-based teaching strategies and measure them through student assessment. That way, we can immediately see what works most effectively. This helps keep learning relevant to students by influencing how subjects and skills are presented. With the Hope Online model, we have enough freedom to explore new ideas and yet maintain accountability in a creative learning environment.”

Ms. Griffith elaborates, describing how Hope Online professional development trainings further enhance staff skills. “Over the years, professional training has become increasingly meaningful, hands-on and specific. We are able to implement what we learn immediately; they prepare us to use the data we have and, in very practical ways, to help students meet important academic goals. We are finding real solutions by focusing on what will make a difference. We also benefit from the high educational standards of the Douglas County School District. We own those standards.”

A Hope Online Learning Center since 2006, Cherry Creek Online has hit a confident stride as Ms. Griffith looks to the future. “Growing as we have, we are glad to be more established now, rather than ‘singing the music as we were writing it.’ Instead, we are now perfecting it.”

Parent Partnerships

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“As a mentor, I have been introduced to new methods, different approaches and innovative resources to foster students’ understanding. I have learned how to direct a student even when she or he hits a wall. Once students see how gratifying it is to learn and achieve, it truly becomes fun as well as a source of personal pride. I definitely saw that happen here with my own daughter.”

Before Hope Online, Ms. Moriee’s daughter could easily memorize, pass a test and forget information within a week.

“Here, with the extended time and the offline work that was required, she had to learn the material. Students not only move forward, but they also slow down long enough to actually learn. Being here helped her develop discipline, study habits and excellent time management,” Ms. Moriee concludes.

Miss Beverly agrees, emphasizing the importance of positive relationships at Hope Online Learning Centers.

“My daughter’s healthy relationship with Ms. Norma, her mentor, has truly helped her blossom. That is something every parent hopes for in their child’s education.”

Lessons Learned in Teacher Mentoring

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founded on trust and respect,” Hope Online emphasizes a highly collaborative instructional environment. Teacher workshops are held twice a month for a full day in addition to a two-week intensive professional development session in the fall and three weeks of collaborative team and study groups in June. Trainings, held at the Hope Online central office, engage Learning Center Directors, Learning Center mentors and Hope Online teachers in learning and problem-solving together. The location, frequency and relevance of these trainings augment the affiliation and teamwork among the various professionals who touch the lives of Hope Online students.

Recognizing that successful Hope Online teachers demonstrate a passion for their work as well as for the students they serve, the school employs proactive hiring methods supported by multi-level mentoring. In so doing, Hope Online ultimately enhances student achievement through the development of exceptional and committed teachers.

* The Hope Online teacher job description differs significantly from both a face-to-face teacher as well as a traditional online teacher. Because of the unique Hope Online model, a Hope Online teacher is similar to an itinerant teacher who is assigned to more than one location where they are responsible for multiple grade levels. In addition to their instructional duties, the Hope Online teacher is responsible for building rapport with the adults in the Learning Center and providing a “mentoring” relationship with the Learning Center mentors. This dual role of instruction and site administration requires a unique skill set for effective teachers.

Raquel's Quiet Quest for Success

After her transfer to Hope Online at Maranatha Learning Center, Raquel was not surprised by the improvement in her studies and grades.

"I was too social," the senior reflects on her past. "There were just too many people to talk to and too much drama to have time for getting my work done."

Raquel is the same friendly student she was at her former school, but now she balances friends and school well.

"It's like a little family here," Raquel states, looking around the room at classmates perusing their online lessons. When she describes her daily routine, it is obvious that, even though Raquel works hard and independently, she feels right at home and very much part of the group. It is also clear that the support she receives at Maranatha has significantly enhanced her learning progress.



Raquel's bright future brings a smile to her face

"Before, I got the message that no one thought I could achieve anything," Raquel explains. "Here, I have people reminding me all the time that I am capable and that they are ready to help me achieve."

Hope Online Teacher Jon Russell affirms her noticeable academic strides resulting from her strong support system at Hope Online.

"Looking at her records for the past year, it is easy to see a dramatic turnaround in her motivation and performance. She is definitely not the same student who enrolled here last year. I see a lot of positive

change."

Raquel's perspective that education "is not just about her online learning, but about achievement, stokes her determination," adds Mr. Russell.

"A good education is getting really good at all the basics, whatever that takes," asserts Raquel.

"To graduate and be able to stand on your own two feet, you need a strong foundation of skills to move to the next phase of education and some form of employment."

Maranatha Learning Center Director Victoria Aguilar is confident about Raquel's future. "Students demonstrate that they are ready for new challenges by showing us that they have made progress and understand their lessons. There are many ways to learn, and we make sure each student has a way to succeed. In Raquel's case, we set her up with some intensive assistance in math. It has been great to watch her thrive even in that subject. All she needed was someone to show her how," Ms. Aguilar concludes.

Ms. Aguilar also praises Raquel's collaborative qualities, which will certainly help her as she navigates toward her dreams for the future. "Raquel helps other students problem-solve and engages them in fun group activities. She is a natural at peace-making and bringing people together. As she develops more confidence, I see this young lady doing great things – she is very capable!"



Raquel and Ms. Aguilar enjoy working together

A New Change for Aubree

When enthusiasm, focused attention and support come together, hope becomes reality. At least that is the case for Aubree, who attends a Hope Online Learning Center in the Montbello neighborhood of Denver.

Aubree, a first grader at New CHANGE Academy, enrolled in school for the first time later than most students. Having to make many adjustments all at once did not deter the young student whose desire to learn is obvious to everyone who knows her. Each morning she greets Miss Deb with her trademark joy, and sometimes she just can't help but sing along with her online lessons.

"The staff at New CHANGE Academy cares about their students," emphasizes Hope Online Teacher Lori Shrug. "The fact that Aubree shows up with a smile each day and has made such academic strides reflects her confidence in those around her." Ms. Shrug is also encouraged by Aubree's



Aubree eagerly begins an online lesson



Aubree is satisfied after completing her assignment

growth in other important skills as she makes friends and works cooperatively with her classmates.

Learning Center Director Miss Deb Haywood could not be more proud of her student.

"We were eager to meet some of Aubree's ongoing needs, and we love having her here each day. We are so pleased to see her wonderful progress."



Marissa poses after earning a Persuasive Argument medal

HOPE HAPPENINGS



Members of the Hope Online Spartans basketball team



Thalir proudly shows her Persuasive Argument award



Members of the Hope Online Hurricanes basketball team



Salvador, Josh and Martin represent the Hope Online Knights basketball team



Vincent is encouraged by Ms. Margo during the Persuasive Argument Competition



First Annual Hope Online Ping Pong Tournament medals



CJ flexes for his next ping pong match



FRA Mentor Ryan demonstrates a ping pong stroke



Jon is ready to prove his ping pong skill



Melanie, Jesse and Christie show their Hope Online spirit



Ping Pong tourney winners Adam, Levi and Jaylen

Hope Online Teacher Survey

The Hope Online learning model involves several forms of evaluation. Please explain some of the most crucial ways you help evaluate learning and how you utilize the results of your evaluation.

DW: Hope Online utilizes the results of effective assessments – DIBELS, Acuity, CELA, Accuplacer and Compass curriculum tests – to customize learning plans that address students’ needs. This allows students who have been struggling with the same challenges year after year to become successful learners.

LS: We use data from formal evaluations to drive instruction. This ensures that students learn from appropriate assignments. If a student is two or more grade levels behind, we modify their assignments accordingly. We also evaluate our students’ progress informally by classroom observation, cumulative records and everyday tasks on the computer.

BP: The Hope Online model has a variety of effective evaluations and assessments tools. In addition, Hope teachers observe and discuss a student’s progress with mentors, SPED teachers, reading specialists, etc. We apply our pooled knowledge of an individual learner’s strengths and weaknesses to design an effective learning plan, coordinate changes when and where needed, while monitoring and evaluating growth in a continuous learning cycle.

How does your collaboration with mentors through online and offline lessons benefit student learning?

DW: I think the best benefit of using both online and offline lessons is personalized education. If a student struggles with a concept, he has more time to review or try another approach. Meanwhile, his classmates advance or move to the next subject. This ability to simultaneously accommodate students at multiple learning levels using blended learning methods allows teachers, mentors and students essential flexibility in the learning process.



Barb Pagano, Hope Online Teacher



Don Westman, Hope Online Teacher



Lori Shrug, Hope Online Teacher

LS: We work with mentors to clearly communicate expectations and to offer the appropriate help each student needs to complete work on time. Some students who require more time to comprehend and complete their work have modified assignments. If online lessons have an offline component, these are easily printed to reinforce a lesson, or to give a fast worker a head start on the next lesson. This combination of online and offline support increases comprehension.

BP: Teachers and mentors coordinate what is taught online with what is taught in the classroom, organizing online and offline work. This gives students a huge advantage and reinforces their learning. The collaborative approach develops an even stronger learning path for students. Additionally, because the Hope Online model brings together educational teams and partnerships, students look at their work with several caring adults. As a result, learning becomes more meaningful for the student, because they have more than just one person invested in them.

What are the most distinct advantages of online teaching and, specifically, teaching at Hope Online?

DW: The instructional advantages I see here at Hope Online are instant feedback about students, great communication and individualized education. I have seen these three elements make many students successful. It brings a smile to my face thinking about it.

Front and Center: From the Learning Center Leader's Desk

Learning Centers make the Hope Online learning model accessible to children across Colorado. Whether in rural Colorado, urban or suburban Denver, or an outlying city, without Learning Center leaders, this would not be possible. As leaders, they need a combination of dedication and operational wisdom to oversee staff and students. Desiring to make quality education an option for all students, these passionate individuals creatively and tirelessly collaborate with Hope Online to serve students.

Ms. Shirley Bennett, Learning Center Manager at Bridges of Silence Academy, describes mentoring in Hope Online's blended learning environment by highlighting the opportunity for more field trips and projects that facilitate in-depth learning.

"Students are not limited here as they would be in a strictly online environment. We do not have a science lab, per se, but students do experiments, and we also teach them life skills that foster responsibility and interpersonal skills for getting along with others. They learn about healthy attitudes and choices they can make for a successful life."

Ms. Carmen McKay, a Learning Center Director in rural Dinosaur, Colorado, adds, "Another benefit of the blended learning model is online feedback. It helps students understand and monitor their progress immediately. Yet, our students also benefit from offline work. With both, they have different ways to 'get it,' and they realize that their challenges are not because they do not have the ability to learn, but only that some things are more difficult for them than others."

Both Ms. Bennett and Ms. McKay are also grateful for Hope Online's professional development. They attest that knowing how to utilize technology allows them to access critical performance data and

implement instruction methods to better serve students. To that same end, they affirm how Hope Online's blended learning model allows for unique mentoring.

"Here, mentors can take the time necessary to help each child identify the most important concept in their reading, whatever that requires. They can offer students options, once they figure out the problem – both mentors and students can do more advanced problem-solving," explains Ms. Bennett.

"I also have the freedom to modify the pace or intensity of a learning plan to allow for a student's natural pace," notes Ms. McKay, "and I find partnering with education and reading specialists through Hope Online is really effective in the blended learning environment."

Reflecting on the perspective of their students, both Learning Center leaders point to positive relationships as a key factor of progress and achievement.

"The most reassuring comment I hear from students is simply how 'awesome' their mentors are and how much they want them around and involved in their learning," shares Ms. Bennett.

Ms. McKay enjoys confirmation from parents as well. "Parents tell me that their children are reading things all around them outside of school. Those stories confirm the confidence that I see on my students' faces."

Both Learning Center leaders take special care to support students' development of positive working relationships with the mentors and other caring adults and educators who contribute to their achievements. These factors affect their students' level of learning – the best indicator of a Learning Center leader's success.

LS: For me, a great advantage here is teaching students of all ages and grades at different Learning Centers. I love the daily variety. In a computer lab, I enjoy one-on-one time with students, getting to know them better and explaining their assignments. Students who understand the material quickly can advance, while students who need extra time also benefit from working at an optimum individual pace.

BP: Being able to accommodate different learning levels is definitely an advantage for online schools. I have also enjoyed partnering with the community – the directors, mentors and staff who interact with the students. Together, we give students the support they need to be successful, distinguishing us from other online schools. Working at Hope Online is incredibly rewarding.

How have you seen the Hope Online model change and evolve over the last six years?

DW: Wow, in six years I have seen many great things happen here. We still have the same philosophy as we did when we started, but now we operate very smoothly. We worked very hard to learn systems, processes, methods and approaches to make the school run efficiently and enhance student learning.

LS: It has changed tremendously over the past six years! The curriculum has improved, especially for the upper level grades, as well as how we utilize assessment data and our alignment of online and offline work. We offer more lessons and assignments for students who need additional work and more online teaching resources to help students with reading, comprehension and even math. Teacher and mentor trainings are increasingly full of practical tips and strategies easily implemented in classrooms. We retain more students – another sure sign of consistent improvement.

BP: The improvement in resources available is monumental. Our support staff, professional development and internal communication are all

significantly better too. We now have an assessment coordinator, a staff development specialist, a student achievement coordinator – all of whom are invaluable. The student services team is increasingly helpful with discipline and behavior issues. In addition, our health specialist, Title I reading specialists, SPED learning specialists and our IT team are instrumental in helping teachers and mentors promote student achievement. Also, Douglas County School District has given Hope great resources, leadership and technological support. We just keep getting better!

With a growing number of online schools and a shortage of teachers with online teaching experience, why do you choose to teach at Hope Online?

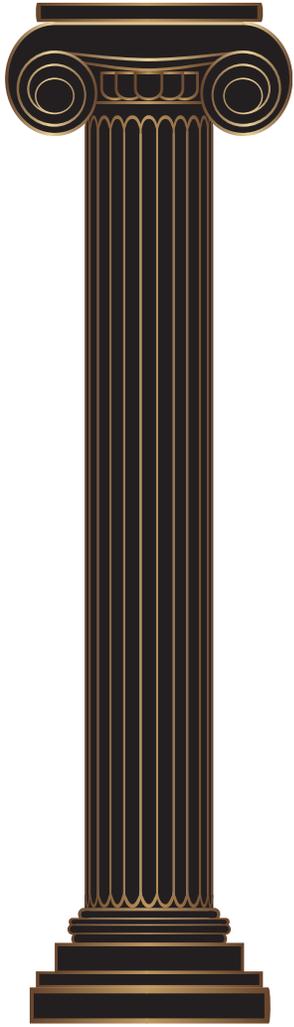
DW: I have been with Hope since we started. I stay because I am a part of Hope, and I have a strong commitment to making Hope the best online school possible. We started meagerly. Now we have all kinds of resources. The sky is the limit for our students, for Hope Online and for me as a teacher.

LS: I love my job at Hope Online for several reasons. I interact with mentors and students from all walks of life, and I enjoy my relationships with them. I work with K-12th grade students, unlike in most other public school teaching positions. Every day there is a student to help or a new challenge to meet. I integrate a variety of assessment data into blended learning instruction. I love working with students in both online and offline work. It is the wave of the future.

BP: Teaching in online schools gave me the freedom I desired to individualize a student's educational plan. I wanted a change – an environment in which I felt that I could make a difference. Each year, I grow and become more instrumental in the education of students – students who may not otherwise have had the opportunity to succeed in school. The wave of the future is more online and blended educational experiences for students, and I like being among the pioneers. Online education is a here to stay and is definitely a happening phenomena.

The Pillar of Achievement

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website will soon ensure maximum accessibility for parents of Hope Online students.

Some of the family and parent outreach focuses specifically on reading skills. Reading teachers send home monthly newsletters and resources to families on reading strategies. Meanwhile, Learning Centers host evening events for families which provide information on teaching reading at home and how to use the Reading A-Z materials. These multiple efforts are establishing a stronger connection between home and school.

Combining a multitude of strategies – curriculum alignment, professional development, high academic expectations and parent involvement – each with its own set of tactics and goals, Hope Online is helping students learn. By monitoring our students, listening to their parents and working with our Learning Center partners, Hope Online has a heightened awareness of our students' needs and has tailored our approach to meet them. Throughout this process, our commitment to student learning continues to be guided by our pillar of achievement.

HOPE

ONLINE LEARNING ACADEMY

367 Inverness Parkway, Suite 225
Englewood, CO 80112

Hope Online Learning Centers

Below is a list of all 2011-2012 Hope Online Learning Centers. Learning Center visits are a hands-on way to learn about Hope Online's unique model, allowing community members to see firsthand how online learning is helping Colorado students. To arrange a Learning Center tour, please call 720-402-3000.

Action Learning Center
All Peoples Learning Center
Belmar Academy
Bridges of Silence Academy
Center of Hope Academy
Chapel Hill Academy
Cherry Creek Online Learning Center
Cornerstone Learning Center
Crescent View Academy
Dinosaur Community Learning Center
Eastwind Academy
Faith Prep Learning Academy
Front Range Academy – Arvada
Front Range Academy – Broomfield

Front Range Academy – Elmira
Front Range Academy – Lakewood
Front Range Academy – Westminster
Hillcrest Academy
I Am Academy
JMJA Learning Center
LARASA – Central Learning Center
Life Preparatory Academy
Love Educational Center
Maranatha Learning Center
New Beginnings Learning Center
New CHANGE Academy
New Hope Academy
Over the Bridge Academy

Pathway Learning Center
Redeemer Learning Center
Renewal Academy – Aurora
Renewal Academy – Mountain View
Renewal Academy – Northglenn
Revolution Global Academy
Roca Fuerte Learning Academy
Solid Rock Academy
Tetra Academy
Trinity Learning Center
Tubman Hilliard Global Academy
Victory Academy
Vision Academy
Westside Learning Center