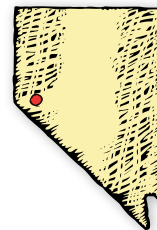




Success Story



Lyon is Taming a Host of Challenges with A+®

Online distance learning strengthens community education commitments

Chuck Ayers distinctly remembers the day that Lyon On-Line launched. "It was September 9, 2009," he says. "0-9, 0-9, 0-9. It was the first day of classes and it was my birthday." And while barely eight months have passed since that day—not even a full school year—Ayers, a certified teacher at Dayton High School (Nev.) and instructor for the Lyon On-Line alternative distance education program at Lyon County School District, believes the program is helping the District better meet its educational commitment to the community in a host of ways.

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— PETE CHAPIN, DIRECTOR OF CURRICULUM AND ACCOUNTABILITY, LYON COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Lyon County School District serves approximately 9,000 students in nine municipalities across Lyon County, one of Nevada's nine original counties. The county is a repository for memories of the Old West: towns still carry names such as Stagecoach and Silver Springs, and mountain lions and herds of wild horses are still resident. Yet, for all the nostalgic overtones inherent in an environment where the land and the lore have deep roots and long horizons, the problems faced by its educators are not unlike those faced in districts of every size across the country.

At a Glance

School Locations: Lyon County, AZ

Challenge: Offer online assessment and credit recovery opportunities to a diverse and dispersed student population

Solution: *A+nyWhere Learning System* Internet-based implementation to provide students with school, home, and off-campus access to credit recovery and supplemental learning programs

Result: Positive teacher and student participation and over 142 credits recovered

"Our District set up Lyon On-Line and adopted the use of the *A+nywhere Learning System*® (A+LS™) from American Education Corporation as its core curriculum technology to provide more avenues for our kids to succeed," says Pete Chapin, director of curriculum and accountability for the Lyon County School District. "Not everyone fits into the traditional school model, and the online program provides another way for us to meet the diverse and often unique needs of our students."

First Things First

Chapin's first target for the program was the students needing credit recovery to stay on their grade paths and move towards graduation. This is where he sees the greatest value so far, and typically these students are in high school. "Consider, for example, a senior who didn't pass freshman English," says Chapin. With A+, instead of putting that senior into the freshman class per se, the program allows the student to "go to the classroom" with an instructor and work on the content at their own pace.



Pete Chapin with students Edgar Carrasco and Chelsey Kendall

"If we had to put that senior back in the class, we might be filling up a seat that rightfully should go to a freshman, or taking time from the teacher that was supposed to go to freshmen," he says. "It's been my experience that when you have juniors or seniors in freshman classes, it's just not a good thing for anybody. The A+LS curriculum provides us a better way to address such situations."

This kind of student would be typical for Chuck Ayers. "I have three periods in the computer lab at Dayton High School," says Ayers. "The students come in during this time. They're given a demonstration of how to access A+LS, and once they get on, they're shown all the classes they're assigned to do. We explain how each program works, how much time the student needs to spend in the study guide, and so on. They have to receive a certain score on the mastery test to go to the next lesson, and they're instructed to take very good notes during the practice guide sessions—and go from there." He says that each student is handled on an individual basis, and

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— CHUCK AYERS, INSTRUCTOR,
THE LYON ON-LINE ALTERNATIVE DISTANCE EDUCATION
PROGRAM AT LYON COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

that he hasn't had a single complaint! (If students cannot make it to the campus computer lab, they access the coursework from home via the Internet.)

Lyon Country provides courses for their elementary, middle schools, and high school across a range of subjects. According to Ayers, 15 of the District's schools are currently using A+LS courses and Lyon On-Line, with users ranging in age from five to 22 years old.

A Powerful, Flexible Tool

While credit recovery is the main focus of Lyon On-Line's first year, with 60.75 credits recovered the first semester and 82 recovered in the ongoing second semester, Chapin says that the District is using the program to meet a host of student needs. "In addition to helping with credit recovery, Lyon On-Line and A+LS provide an excellent alternative for advanced students, homebound (medical) students, home school students, students with personal issues that prevent regular school attendance, and students who have been expelled," he says. "It's something that can help us meet many challenges."

For Ayers, some of these more unusual challenges have provided the most memorable experiences of his first year as an instructor for Lyon On-Line. "One of my students was a freshman, a twin, who had a heart transplant in March," says Ayers. "For medical reasons, he wasn't cleared to come back to school after the surgery, so we went over to his house after school, set up his computer, and got him going so he could stay current with classes." According to Ayers, the student enjoyed the experience immensely, and now has been cleared to return to campus this coming November.



Another medical homebound situation involved a brother and sister. "I have a third grader who has cancer that isn't in full remission," says Ayers. "So she cannot go to school." Neither can her five-year-old brother, who cannot risk being exposed to germs at school, then returning home and endangering his sister. "So he is taking two classes on A+LS for kindergartners," says Ayers. It's working out just fine. A homebound teacher visits the family on a weekly basis to go over all the work being done.

Specific schools within the District have also tapped into A+LS to help prepare for mandatory tests. At the Dayton Intermediate School, the principal and teacher in charge of tutorials for an upcoming Measure of Academic Progress (MAP) testing met with Ayers to see if A+LS was compatible with their vision of the tutorials students needed. "I sat them down and went through the program, and they decided that A+LS would be very useful in helping their group (107 students) prepare for the MAP testing," he says.

The school set up two computer rooms, and the students alternated, 25 in one room, 25 in another,

coming on Monday through Wednesday for two hours a day after school.

Administrators were delighted with the results.

"When you meet with parents and explain the program, you see how happy they are to have something that's helping them meet a situation they didn't see an immediate solution to," says Ayers. "And the kids are happy as well, especially the homebound kids. They feel like they're in school, even though they can't actually go there at the time."

While Chapin doesn't have much hard data, at Dayton HS alone, over 60 credits have been issued so far.

Considering the nascent state of the program, he firmly believes that Lyon On-Line and A+LS are going to be a winning combination for the District. "Ultimately, it will improve our graduation rates because it is providing a form of instruction that will help at-risk students earn credits," he says. And that's something that should bring smiles to everyone in Lyon County.

About The American Education Corporation (AEC)

Early recognition of the national trend in school accountability, combined with an understanding of the impact of the Internet on education, has allowed AEC to become an industry leader in e-learning solutions. Few education companies offer the systemized combination of formative assessment, proven instruction, alignment to standards, and data management and reporting capabilities of AEC's comprehensive courseware and learning management system.

The *A+nyWhere Learning System*® (A+LS™) software program is an e-learning solution ideal for schools searching for more efficient ways to improve their instructional processes. The A+LS courseware program consists of an award-winning instructional management system supported by significant core curriculum content for grades K–12 and adult learners delivered through a local area network (LAN), a wide area network (WAN), or the Internet. The research-based curriculum content is in the subject areas of Reading, Mathematics, Language Arts, Science, Writing, and Social Sciences. This curriculum is linked to state standards and combined with valuable formative assessment tests designed to guide instruction throughout the school year — as well as give school administrators the data they need to ensure maximum student performance.

Would you like to learn more about the *A+nyWhere Learning System*?

Give us a call at 800.480.3935 to arrange a custom product demonstration with Backbone Communications, your local licensed product reseller. You can also check us out on the web at www.BackboneCommunications.com



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Lyon County School District, Nevada