

Public Schools Need to Enter the 21st-Century

~ Editorial ~

In this modern-day and age, it's a wonder why more public school systems don't offer students the opportunity to take classes through online high schools which are not provided in their own school. It has become routine that every spring the local high school promulgates the schedule of classes for the following fall, and invariably some classes currently or previously offered are nowhere to be found on the new list. This presents a huge problem for students who were planning on taking specific classes, whether for a particular college track they might be on or for something more attuned to getting a job immediately upon graduating high school.

There are so many variables, such as the number of students enrolled in the school, the school's budget, and their ability to hire enough faculty. Also, let's not forget the ever-present "minimum number of students" required to offer a class.

There has to be a better way to maintain a consistent offering of classes year in and year out. There also must be a better way to accommodate the variety of learning styles among students, yet schools ignore this.

The answer lies online. There are hundreds of online high schools across the country which are accredited by the same organizations which certify both public and private high schools. Also, each of these schools has a different teaching method and pace. Some are paced slower for those students who need extra time, and some are paced faster to accommodate students who can process information quickly. Why aren't our local public high schools supplementing their curriculum with online courses? Just

about every college in the country now offers online courses. Are high school students so different from college students?

OnlineSchool.org reports that over 4.5 million K-12 students take online courses. That is not enough. Public school systems need to look at expanding "blended" curricula whereby students attend some classes as they always have, but have the opportunity to supplement old-fashioned classes with online classes. This will allow students to choose from far more classes than a public high school can offer. And before the school systems or teachers' unions say "no," school boards need to do the research and have the facts ready which show a blended curriculum can work. This issue isn't about money, budgets, unions, or salaries. It's about giving students the

education they need in order to become contributing members of society.

As a current college student and graduate of an online high school, I have experienced firsthand the positive attributes of an online high school, as well as online classes in both high school and college. Students' futures don't rest in the past – they lie with the technology of the future, which will educate and train them to 21st-century requirements!

Sincerely,

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