

# SPOTLIGHT ON **Online Learning** IN MICHIGAN SCHOOLS

## AN OVERVIEW OF SEVEN MICHIGAN SCHOOLS THAT EFFECTIVELY USE ONLINE LEARNING

Until recently, most K-12 online students in Michigan and elsewhere have used online courses to supplement existing course schedules at their local high schools. Increasingly, educators, students and parents are looking to online learning as an expanded alternative delivery model.

The seven profiled schools each have their own online learning story to tell. The schools were asked to provide information on the historical, current and future use of online learning in their schools. Questions were asked about when online learning began in their schools, what needs were fulfilled, what support students are provided, and what will change, if anything, in their online learning programs in the future.

If you'd like to learn more about how your school can use online learning to expand the curriculum, help students graduate with their class and provide flexibility in scheduling, please visit [www.mivhs.org](http://www.mivhs.org).

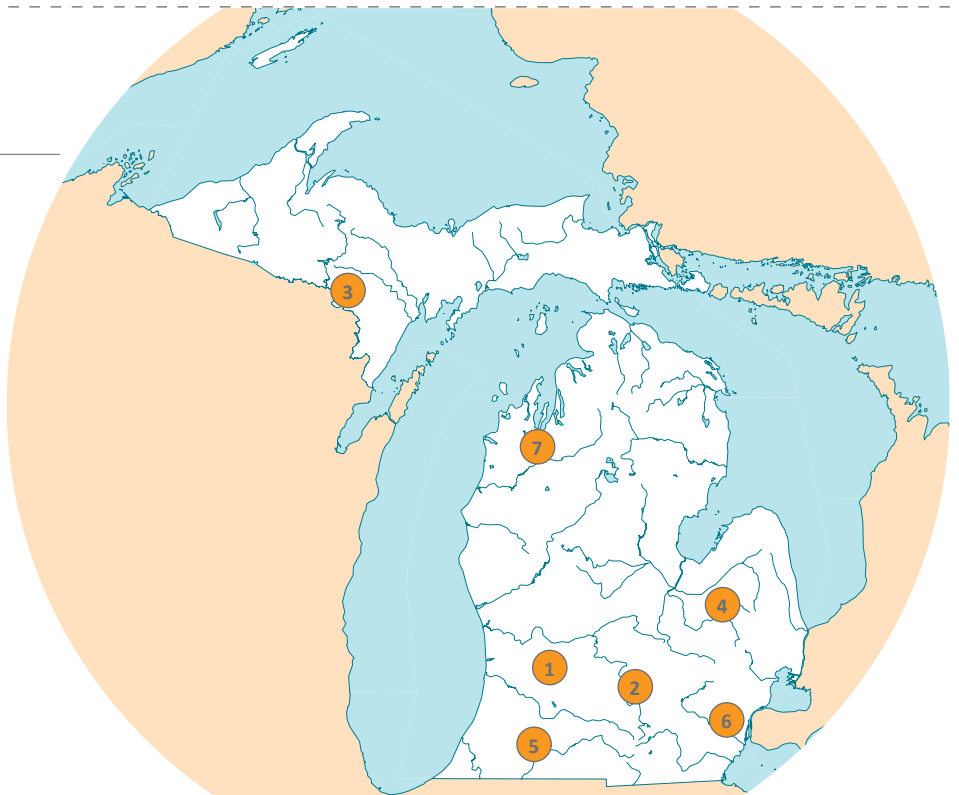
Jamey Fitzpatrick  
President & CEO  
Michigan Virtual University

## PROFILED SCHOOLS

The following schools were selected for this spotlight on online learning from seven different geographical areas in Michigan.

- 1) Caledonia High School
- 2) Holt High School
- 3) Kingsford High School
- 4) Millington High School
- 5) Schoolcraft High School
- 6) Thurston High School
- 7) Traverse City West High School

*The information for this report was compiled from the participating schools' websites and surveys, interviews and excerpts from existing Michigan Virtual University articles and reports.*



## CALEDONIA COMMUNITY SCHOOLS – CALEDONIA HIGH SCHOOL

9050 Kraft Ave.  
Caledonia, MI 49316  
<http://www2.caledonia.k12.mi.us>



### PREPARING STUDENTS FOR LIFE

Caledonia Community Schools is located in a suburban/rural area near Grand Rapids. Caledonia offers the advantages of living in a small community plus easy access to the activities in the metropolitan area. The district covers approximately 100 square miles, which include parts of Kent, Allegan and Barry counties. Total enrollment for 2008-09 was 4,050. Caledonia Community Schools is comprised of an early childhood center, four elementary schools, two middle schools and two high schools (Caledonia High School and Glenmor High School).

### CALEDONIA HIGH SCHOOL

Jim Glazier, Principal  
Jim Crites, Assistant Principal  
Kurt Hoffman, Mentor  
Thomas O'Brien, Mentor  
**Student body:** 1,340 students (Grades 9-12)

### MISSION STATEMENT

*The Caledonia High School staff will provide all students with a learning environment and educational programs that enable them to become caring people and effective users of ideas and information.*

### MVS ONLINE LEARNING ENROLLMENT STATISTICS

<u>Year</u>	<u>No. of Enrollments</u>	<u>Completion Rate</u>
2008/09	115	93.8%
2007/08	99	91.9%
2006/07	52	95.2%
2005/06	33	93.8%

### ONLINE LEARNING HISTORY

Caledonia High School has used MVS products and services since 2003. At that time, online learning was used for credit recovery, curriculum expansion and scheduling flexibility, and to meet alternative student needs, to offer technology skills and to meet state mandates. The program began small and used student services for implementation. Funding and supervision for online learning were early obstacles.

### CURRENT USE OF ONLINE LEARNING

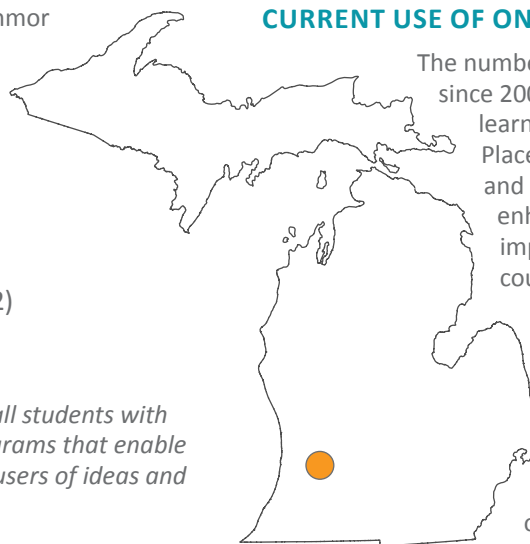
The number of seats used has steadily increased since 2006. Students choose to use online learning courses for credit recovery, Advanced Placement (AP) and world language courses, and to expand the curriculum. MVS has enhanced the learning experience by improving the communication between the course teachers and the school mentors.

When students are having difficulties the course teachers actively seek out the mentors for help. Both teacher and mentor work to find ways to help the individual student. Caledonia High School uses online learning to maintain fiscal responsibility. Ongoing obstacles are financial support for online learning and a lack of supervision of online learners during some class periods.

Administrators, counselors and teachers are involved in the program. Currently, a Board-supported online learning policy is contained within other school policies.

### FUTURE OF ONLINE LEARNING

The use of online learning will be expanded if the budget allows to ensure student success and meet state guidelines. Anticipated obstacles include funding and scheduling issues.



“Choice is a very powerful tool for young people and online courses offer a choice to students who want to do something different. There are students who excel when allowed to work independently away from the distractions of a group setting. Self-reliance, self-discipline and organization are all traits that can come as extra benefits from these courses outside of the established course objectives.”

Thomas O'Brien, Mentor, Caledonia High School

## HOLT PUBLIC SCHOOLS – HOLT HIGH SCHOOL

5885 W. Holt Road  
Holt, Michigan 48842  
<http://www.holthighschool.net>



### TEACHING EXCELLENCE

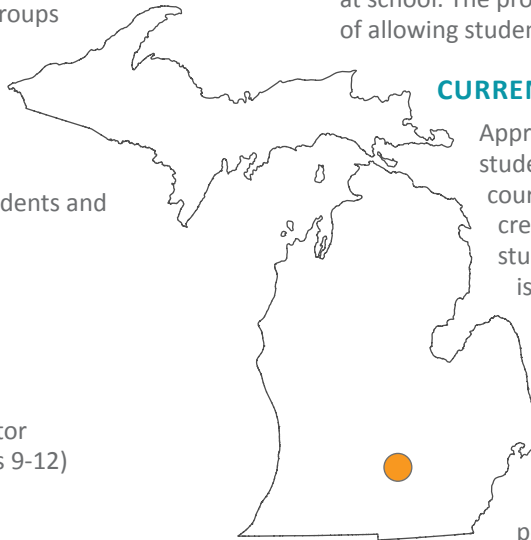
Just minutes from Lansing and East Lansing, the Holt Public School district encompasses 13 schools, including one year-round elementary. Four Holt schools have been named Michigan Exemplary Schools by the State Board of Education, and Holt High School has been honored as one of the top 100 schools in the country, recognized through the award of a Presidential Blue Ribbon.

### HOLT PUBLIC SCHOOLS VALUE:

- Diversity of individuals and groups
- Building and sustaining human relationships
- Fiscal integrity and responsibility
- Safe schools, and healthy students and adults

### HOLT HIGH SCHOOL

Brian Templin, Principal  
Ann Coe, Assistant Principal and Mentor  
**Student body:** 1,800 students (Grades 9-12)



### ONLINE LEARNING HISTORY

Holt High School has used *MVS* products and services since 2002. Online learning was initially used for AP classes. It allowed Holt students to take advanced placement courses that were not being offered in the traditional school setting. Allowing students to take online courses also provided an opportunity for students to increase the flexibility in taking course offerings. Holt also found that it was an outstanding way to allow students to make up credits for graduation. Students were allowed to work on the courses from home or during any open time that they might have at school. The program continues to grow, specifically in the area of allowing students to make up academic credits.

### CURRENT USE OF ONLINE LEARNING

Approximately six percent of Holt High Schools total student enrollment of 1,800 (2008-09) took an *MVS* course(s). Holt continues to use online learning for credit recovery and to ease the scheduling conflicts students face. Taking an online course from *MVS* is considered convenient by Holt students. Being able to work on a class anytime/anywhere, provides students with the freedom to work at their own pace. It also allows the students in the summer to make up credits needed for graduation. *MVS* has become a major addition to Holt's summer school activities. The school has adopted an online learning policy within existing policies, therefore a Board policy is deemed unnecessary.

### MISSION STATEMENT

*The mission of Holt High School is to create a supportive culture where every student experiences success in an exemplary academic program as measured by district, state or national standards. Each student will graduate as a responsible and respectful citizen with a clearly defined post-secondary plan.*

### FUTURE OF ONLINE LEARNING

Holt will continue to use online learning and there will be plenty of opportunities for students to be involved. Each student is carefully screened and having Holt High School continue to provide a mentor has given the school an outstanding success rate. Holt expects to continue to provide courses and services to help meet the needs of its students.

### MVS ONLINE LEARNING ENROLLMENT STATISTICS

<u>Year</u>	<u>No. of Enrollments</u>	<u>Completion Rate</u>
2008/09	105	73.2%
2007/08	106	69.5%
2006/07	43	74.4%
2005/06	34	73.3%

**“Michigan Virtual School classes have helped many students to earn credits that have enabled the students to graduate with their classes. It has allowed them to continue their education while working, participating in sports or engaged in other activities.”**

Ann Coe, Assistant Principal, Holt High School

# BREITUNG TOWNSHIP SCHOOL DISTRICT – KINGSFORD HIGH SCHOOL

431 Hamilton Drive  
Kingsford, MI 48902  
<http://www.kingsford.org/khsweb/>



## PROVIDING A QUALITY EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE

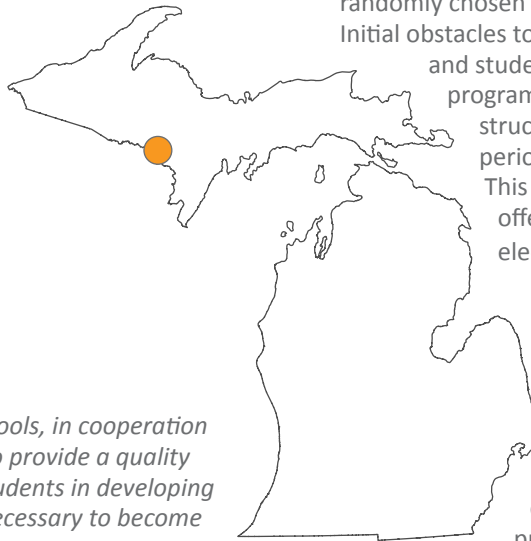
Kingsford High School is a member of the Dickinson ISD and is located in Breitung Township on the Menominee River, which forms the boundary with Wisconsin. The district serves a student population of approximately 1,700 students through one high school, one middle school and one elementary school.

## KINGSFORD HIGH SCHOOL

Lyle Smithson, Principal  
Robert Usitalo, Assistant Principal  
Nancy Jayne, Mentor  
Nick Gayan, Mentor  
Mary Tachick, Mentor  
**Student body:** 617 (Grades 9-12)

## MISSION STATEMENT

*The mission of Breitung Township Schools, in cooperation with families and our community, is to provide a quality educational experience to assist all students in developing the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to become successful citizens.*



## ONLINE LEARNING HISTORY

Kingsford High School has used MVS products and services since 2003. The initial purpose of online learning was for credit recovery in a summer school program where students reported in two-hour blocks for six weeks. The program was supervised by one mentor. In year two, students in credit jeopardy were randomly chosen to take an online class during the school day. Initial obstacles to online learning included technology, funding and student-parent awareness. The summer school program in conjunction with MVS instructors was structured to allow students to work for extended periods of time to complete their coursework early. This cooperative venture permitted the school to offer a variety of summer credit recovery and elective options for students in the district.

## CURRENT USE OF ONLINE LEARNING

The online learning program has significantly expanded and is now offered during the school day, as well as in the summer. The current use of online learning is for credit recovery, scheduling flexibility for classes not offered on campus and to alleviate scheduling problems due to reductions in teaching staff. Staff members involved include two teachers who have moved their courses to an online Moodle format, two mentors and media center supervisors. Seat-time waiver options are being explored. Obstacles continue to be technology and associated expenses. There is no Board policy in place for online learning.

## MVS ONLINE LEARNING ENROLLMENT STATISTIC

<u>Year</u>	<u>No. of Enrollments</u>	<u>Completion Rate</u>
2008/09	64	80.0%
2007/08	68	83.3%
2006/07	29	92.9%
2005/06	29	88.5%

## FUTURE OF ONLINE LEARNING

Blended instruction will become more of the norm at Kingsford High School. Online learning will continue to be used for credit recovery and to aid transfer students in meeting MMC requirements, as well as attract more home school/private school students. Online learning will be used to expand students' exposure to future career-related elective classes and opportunities outside the school walls.

“Online learning has significantly benefited students at Kingsford High School by providing them with curricular offerings beyond what we can provide on our campus, recovery credit options both after school hours and over the summer months, and also by offering students an educational platform that better suits their learning style.”

Nancy Jayne, Mentor, Kingsford High School

# MILLINGTON COMMUNITY SCHOOLS – MILLINGTON HIGH SCHOOL

8780 Dean Drive  
Millington, MI 48746  
[http://www.mcsdistrict.com/schools/high\\_school/high\\_school.html](http://www.mcsdistrict.com/schools/high_school/high_school.html)



## EDUCATION IS A SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

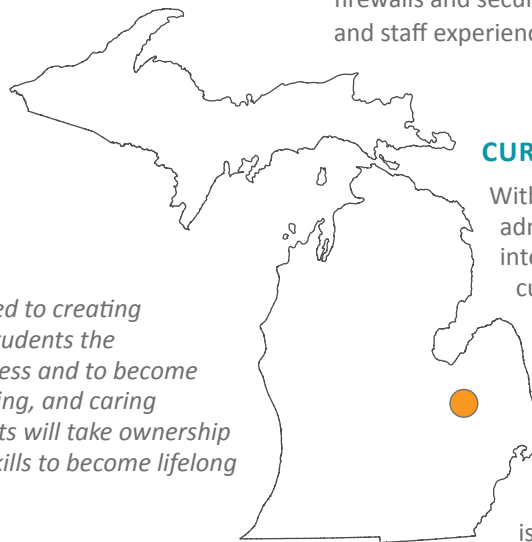
Millington Community Schools is comprised of Kirk Elementary, Meachum Junior High School and Millington High School. Millington Community Schools believes education is a responsibility shared by parents, students, the school and the community.

## MILLINGTON HIGH SCHOOL

Roger E. Bearss II, Principal  
Linda Petzold, Mentor  
**Student body:** 550 students (Grades 9-12)

## MISSION STATEMENT

*Millington High School staff is dedicated to creating a school environment that allows all students the opportunities to achieve personal success and to become productive, goal-oriented, self-respecting, and caring members of our global society. Students will take ownership for their desires and will possess the skills to become lifelong learners.*



## ONLINE LEARNING HISTORY

Millington High School has used *MVS* products and services since 2006, at first to increase elective offerings and aid students in credit recovery. Students were allowed to select courses of interest or courses needed for credit recovery. A counselor, mentor and principal were involved in the program. Initial barriers included a lack of computers, technology system issues, like firewalls and security, and the overall uncertainty from students and staff experiencing online learning for the first time.

## CURRENT USE OF ONLINE LEARNING

With a dedicated mentor and school administration, Millington has successfully integrated online learning into the high school curriculum. Currently, students use online learning for credit recovery, to take AP courses and as an aid in scheduling. One course area that Millington has been very involved with is the online world languages offerings. With the state language requirements, Millington has used *MVS* for many students' first year language courses. The cost of the program is becoming an issue as district enrollment decreases and state funding is cut. The program

is not much different from years past, except for the transition of students from traditional to online learning is much smoother due to the mentor's experience in overseeing the program. The Millington Board of Education has adopted an online learning policy for the school program.

## MVS ONLINE LEARNING ENROLLMENT STATISTICS

Year	No. of Enrollments	Completion Rate
2008/09	317	71.3%
2007/08	316	89.9%
2006/07	27	50.0%
2005/06	2	100%

## FUTURE OF ONLINE LEARNING

Online learning will be used to fill a void left by decreased enrollment and the ability to offer courses on a yearly basis. Millington plans to continue to offer online learning in the areas of AP, world languages and credit recovery to meet the needs of students while being fiscally responsible to the community. Anticipated obstacles include the cost of running the online program and the continued need to upgrade technology.

**“There’s not as much pressure with online learning. If you need five minutes to zone out, you can take it, and then get back to work.”**

Millington High School & *MVS* student

# SCHOOLCRAFT COMMUNITY SCHOOLS – SCHOOLCRAFT HIGH SCHOOL

551 East Lyons Street  
Schoolcraft, Michigan 49087  
<http://www.schoolcraftschools.org/hs.html>



## PROVIDING THE OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL STUDENTS TO REACH THEIR POTENTIAL

Schoolcraft Community Schools are located in the Village of Schoolcraft (population, 1,587), which is in Kalamazoo County in southwest Michigan. The district is comprised of Schoolcraft Early Elementary, Schoolcraft Upper Elementary, Schoolcraft Middle School and Schoolcraft High School. The small size of the school population fosters strong connections between teachers, students and parents, which translates into individual attention that is unsurpassed in other school districts. A strong core curriculum coupled with affiliations with regional and state programs provides a breadth of programming opportunities for Schoolcraft students that rival those found in any other school district.

## SCHOOLCRAFT HIGH SCHOOL

John Kolassa, Principal  
Larry Ledlow, Guidance Counselor  
Rebecca Poublon, Mentor  
Brad King, Mentor  
Terry Anderson, Mentor and Technical Support  
James Weiss, Technical Support  
**Student body:** 397 students (Grades 9-12)

## MISSION STATEMENT

*We, the staff of Schoolcraft High School, believe all students are capable of learning. We, therefore, commit ourselves to providing all our students the opportunity to reach their maximum potential of academic and social challenges with the goal of becoming responsible, productive members of our society.*

## MVS ONLINE LEARNING ENROLLMENT STATISTICS

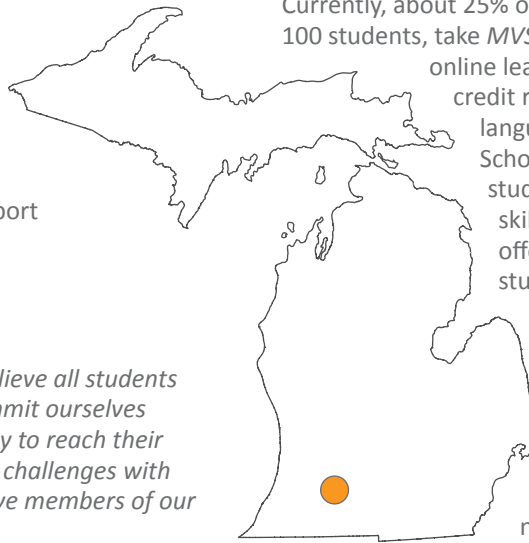
<u>Year</u>	<u>No. of Enrollments</u>	<u>Completion Rate</u>
2008/09	182	88.8%
2007/08	156	95.5%
2006/07	145	93.1%
2005/06	149	91.7%

## ONLINE LEARNING HISTORY

Schoolcraft High School has used *MVS* products and services since 2003. Initially, online learning was used for credit recovery, curriculum expansion (students took world language courses online that were not available at Schoolcraft) and scheduling flexibility. Online courses were accessed before school each day and after school two days a week. Three staff members were involved: one teacher, a mentor and a computer lab staff member. Online learning times were designated, not variable.

## CURRENT USE OF ONLINE LEARNING

Currently, about 25% of SHS's total enrollment of 397 students, or 100 students, take *MVS* online courses. Schoolcraft students use online learning for all educational needs, including credit recovery, curriculum expansion (AP, world language and other courses not offered at Schoolcraft), scheduling flexibility, alternative students' needs and to strengthen technology skills. The program has grown significantly, offering more computers and time for students to take online courses during their class day. Schoolcraft has four staff members, its guidance counselor and building principal all directly involved with online learning. Nearly 200 online seats are available this school year, allowing students to broaden their knowledge base. While there is no written policy in place, the Schoolcraft Board of Education approves the online learning program annually.



## FUTURE OF ONLINE LEARNING

Schoolcraft High School anticipates online learning taking on a larger role in the future. Being able to afford the program and keeping technology current are potential obstacles. With the Michigan Merit Curriculum, students will continue to need the course offerings and flexibility of online courses. Additionally, SHS principal John Kolassa envisions that middle school students be given the opportunity to earn high school credit by taking online courses.

**“I see online learning taking on a larger role (in the future). Online classes offer great variety, especially to a small district like Schoolcraft.”**

John Kolassa, Principal, Schoolcraft High School

# SOUTH REDFORD SCHOOL DISTRICT – THURSTON HIGH SCHOOL

26255 Schoolcraft  
Redford, MI 48239  
<http://southredford.net/thurston/>



## BUILDING BRIGHTER FUTURES

The South Redford School District is located in Redford Township, in Southeast Michigan. The district has a welcoming and friendly small-town atmosphere where students, parents and staff come together to create a dynamic learning environment. South Redford serves a student population of approximately 3,400 students through four neighborhood elementary schools, one middle school and one high school.

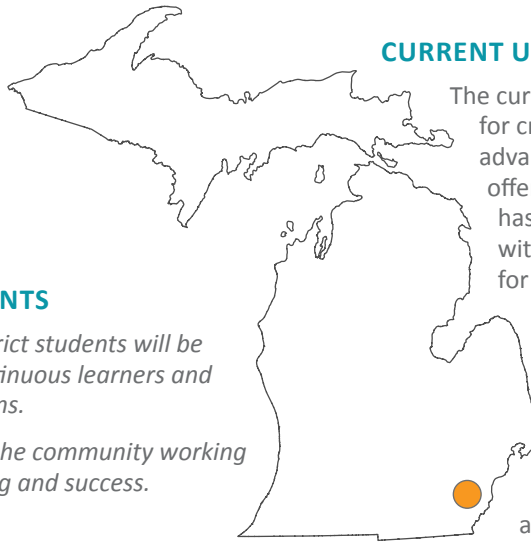
## THURSTON HIGH SCHOOL

William Simms, Principal  
Jim Finn, Assistant Principal  
**Student body:** 1,190 students  
(Grades 9-12)

## VISION AND MISSION STATEMENTS

*Vision: The South Redford School District students will be prepared to compete globally, be continuous learners and healthy, productive, responsible citizens.*

*Mission: Staff, students, parents and the community working together to ensure continuous learning and success.*



## ONLINE LEARNING HISTORY

Thurston High School has used MVS products and services since 2004. Internal technology restrictions were the major obstacle in the initial implementation, but barriers were removed to expand online learning opportunities. The focus was primarily on credit recovery, to resolve a course conflict or to satisfy a graduation requirement for a senior. At first, online courses were offered only during the summer, but were then expanded to the night school program. The program was unstructured and required a highly motivated student to complete it.

## CURRENT USE OF ONLINE LEARNING

The current use of online learning remains mostly for credit recovery, but has been expanded to advanced courses and world languages that are not offered in the offline environment. The program has two teachers on staff who serve as mentors, with several other teachers trained as mentors for night and summer school support. Thurston High School is working to provide students with opportunities to use seat-time waivers where applicable. Current obstacles to the use of online learning include the cost and integrating online learning into the regular classroom system. The South Redford Board of Education has an adopted policy that accepts online learning as a form of academic credit.

## MVS ONLINE LEARNING ENROLLMENT STATISTICS

Year	No. of Enrollments	Completion Rate
2008/09	365	*
2007/08	320	*
2006/07	47	*
2005/06	2	*

*\*Enrollments include courses and programs (e.g., Student Direct courses that are not lead by a teacher) that do not track completers.*

## FUTURE OF ONLINE LEARNING

Thurston High School expects to integrate online learning within instructor-led classes to enable teachers to more effectively differentiate instruction for students and to give students more direct control over the pace of their learning. This may include online instructional materials supplanting the purchase of textbooks. An anticipated obstacle will be the need to find additional ways to enable students to access the online material. The need for netbooks or some other hardware with connectivity for those who lack it at home will become a greater need.

“The need for ongoing learning supported by technology will only increase in the future. Students who learn the skills needed to be successful in this (online) environment will have a leg up as they continue their life-long journey in building their skills.”

Bill Simms, Principal, Thurston High School

# TRAVERSE CITY AREA PUBLIC SCHOOLS – TRAVERSE CITY WEST SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

5376 N. Long Lake Road  
Traverse City, MI 49684  
<http://www.tcaps.net/wsh>



## TOGETHER WE REACH HIGHER

Traverse City Area Public Schools (TCAPS) offers a comprehensive K-12 curriculum with an enrollment of over 10,000 students throughout a 300-mile geography and nearly 1,500 teaching and support staff. District school facilities include 13 elementary schools (including one Montessori school), two middle schools, two senior highs, and an alternative high school.

## TRAVERSE CITY WEST SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Joe Tibaldi, Principal  
**Student body:** 1,800 students (Grades 9-12)

## MISSION STATEMENT

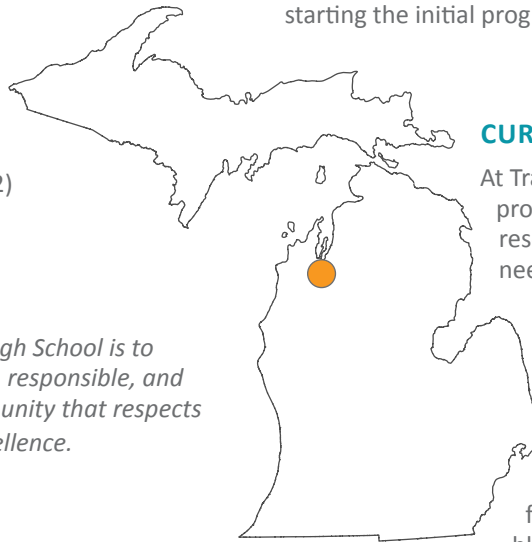
*The mission of Traverse City West Senior High School is to educate our students to be knowledgeable, responsible, and productive citizens in a safe learning community that respects and celebrates diversity, creativity and excellence.*

## MVS ONLINE LEARNING ENROLLMENT STATISTICS

Year	No. of Enrollments	Completion Rate
2008/09	193	74.3%
2007/08	123	75.5%
2006/07	2	0%

## ONLINE LEARNING HISTORY

Traverse City West Senior High School has used MVS products and services since 2006. The online learning program began with a seat-time waiver in pupil accounting from the Michigan Department of Education, supported by the TCAPS board of education. Online learning provided scheduling flexibility, curriculum recovery and expansion for students. Counselors, administrators, lead teachers and tech specialists were involved in starting the initial program.



## CURRENT USE OF ONLINE LEARNING

At Traverse City West today, online learning provides blended learning opportunities, resolves scheduling conflicts, meets the needs of students' learning style preference, and prepares students for college and the workplace. In 2008-09, 253 students enrolled in 284 online classes; six students took three or more online classes and one student took his or her entire schedule online during one or more trimesters. Currently, a lack of funds prevents more staff from creating blended classes. The Traverse City Board of Education has adopted an online learning policy. In addition, the Board Curriculum Committee periodically conducts more detailed reviews and assessments of the program.

## FUTURE OF ONLINE LEARNING

Traverse City West hopes to offer more blended courses in the future using its own staff members; several courses are now available in this mode. The administration believes that the demand for online classes will continue to grow and all students should experience online classes before graduation. Anticipated obstacles to online learning will include dealing with students who do not have Internet access at home, monitoring online students' work regularly and having teachers with skills to create engaging online learning.

*“It was my class ... because I got to choose when it worked in my schedule. I really like the idea of the independence of online learning. I’m really excited for college ... I know I will have a lot of opportunities to take online courses and I feel really prepared.”*

Traverse City West Senior High School &  
MVS Chinese 1A student