



COURSE ACCESS

Policy Summary

ExcelinEd Policy Toolkit - 2018

EXPANDING EQUITY OF ACCESS

Course Access is a state level policy that provides K-12 students with access to a wide range of quality courses from diverse, accountable providers. These courses, which could be delivered in online, blended, or face-to-face environments, may not otherwise be available to students. Course Access policies also simplify the search and enrollment process for students by creating a state-wide, dynamic online catalog with information about providers and courses. Course Access combines state of the art technology with innovative policy to provide course offerings beyond what was possible.

What is Course Access?

Major benefits of Course Access include:

- Engaging students by expanding curricular options
- Increasing schedule flexibility for students and schools
- Offering students more flexible options and alternatives that meet their unique learning style and needs

Classes offered through Course Access can be delivered:

- Fully online,
- Blended, or
- Face-to-face.

Courses in these programs can be provided by a number of different entities such as teachers in the state's districts, charter schools, institutes of higher education, non-profits and private course providers.

What should go into a Course Access program?

A Course Access program should:

1. Clearly define student eligibility and opportunity to select courses and providers,
2. Design program to accept a range of delivery models and course structures,
3. Develop meaningful and rigorous state review of prospective providers and/or courses,
4. Create strong monitoring systems to ensure course quality,
5. Establish flexible and sustainable funding models,
6. Align with the state's broader education systems,
7. Engage with districts and schools in a sustained and deliberate manner, and
8. Communicate effectively with students and parents.

"Course Access promises states and schools a powerful tool for offering every student every course they need to excel in the 21st century. By coupling state-of-the-art technology with innovative policy, states are using Course Access programs to allow schools to offer courses far beyond what was previously possible."

Governor Jeb Bush



Why is a Course Access policy necessary?

Across the country, too many students lack access to the full range of courses needed to prepare for success in college and career, particularly in STEM fields. Many students who would be able to pass advanced courses never get the chance because those courses are not offered at their school.

A [recent report](#) from the U.S. Department of Education found that:

- Only 50 percent of high schools nationwide offer calculus and only 63 percent offer physics.
- 1 in 4 high schools with the highest percentage of black and Latino students do not offer Algebra II, and a third of these schools do not offer chemistry.

Through Course Access, states can create a central hub in a community-wide ecosystem of integrated learning opportunities that are student-centered and aligned with community and workforce needs. Course Access can fill a significant gap in these learning opportunities for rural students, career and technical education, and high-quality core courses.

States with Course Access

