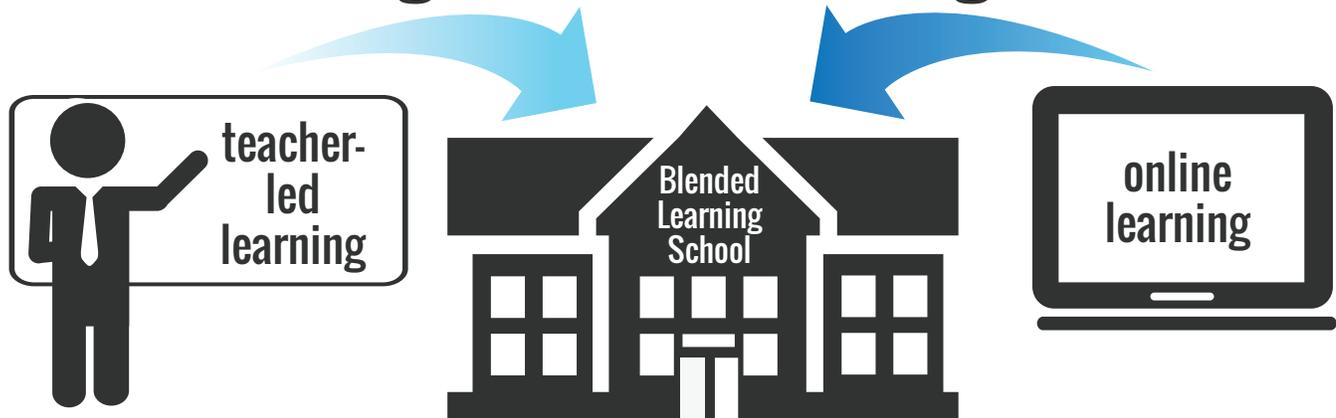


# Blended Learning

combining the best teaching methods



## Scaling Excellence: Greeley-Evans School District 6 Blended Learning Report

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- Board of Education

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Our Vision

Leveraging technology, personalizing learning, empowering teachers, accelerating results, elevating our community

### Our Objective

To transform our schools, over the course of the next five years, into blended learning environments

### Our Rationale

Our primary purpose for implementing a blended learning approach is to continue to increase student achievement, while ensuring our young people are prepared for post-secondary learning and careers as they learn in a 21st Century environment. Blended learning will revolutionize learning for our students. With technology's assistance we can dramatically increase their control over the time, place, path and pace of learning. In doing so, we're confident we will see far higher rates of engagement and thus, achievement. Students will be positioned to learn more, about more things, to run when they want and walk when they need. And with technology's assistance they will receive immediate feedback on what they know and do not know. More than ever, our students will be empowered to accelerate their learning, or get the assistance they need.

Blended learning will also better position teachers to do more of what they love: guiding individual student learning. As classroom sizes and demands have increased, teachers have struggled to differentiate their instruction based on the needs of their students. Blended learning will rebalance this equation, allowing teachers to focus on the highest value exchanges with students.

## Definition of Blended Learning

Blended learning takes place in a traditional school building and adds the effective use of education technology to transform the learning experience for students. It combines teacher-led instruction with high-quality digital educational content that is customized to a student's needs and abilities. Blended learning is the transformative educational innovation of our time and has the potential to significantly improve K-12 education throughout the country.

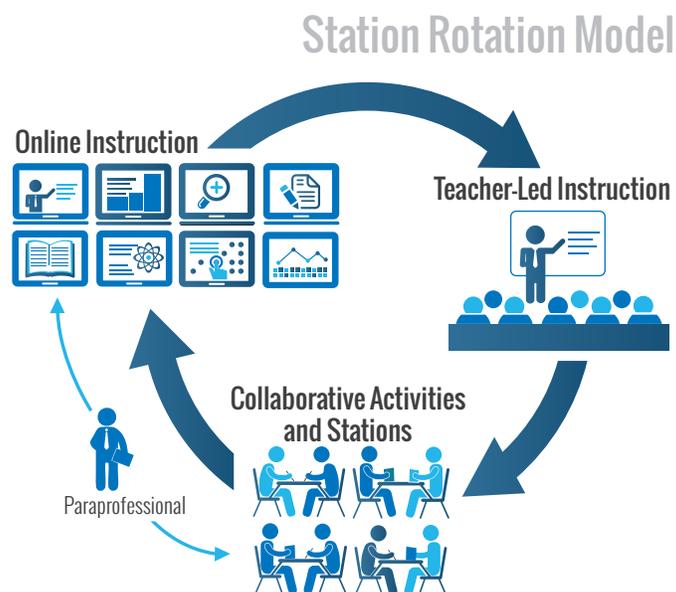
## Successful Implementation of Blended Learning

We will know that we have arrived at the vision when every single student is working at their own pace and grade-level designations become less relevant. Individual students start where they left off on their learning progression, and if they so choose, continue working toward advanced studies as they are provided 24/7/365 access to their learning. Students continue learning in traditional brick-and-mortar schools with age level peers, but may be learning things far advanced for their age. Technology is leveraged to provide students, parents, and teachers instant feedback to eliminate learning plateaus. Students are aware of where they are on the road to post-secondary and workforce readiness as they monitor their personal learning dashboards. When students demonstrate mastery over a unit of study, they will receive acknowledgment of their success much like a student in martial arts moves to the next belt as a symbol of mastery. Their schoolwork will mirror the world of work, in the 21st Century, including collaborating on projects with peers and applying their learning to solve real-world problems. Teachers will be monitoring student data to target the needs of small groups and individual students. This will ensure that teacher time is focused on the highest valued interactions with students, increasing each teacher's sense of efficacy. This will in turn lead to greater job satisfaction, as teachers are better able to meet the needs of all students. This rich, blended learning environment will strengthen our student's personal advantage while strengthening the communities of Greeley and Evans.

## Blended Models

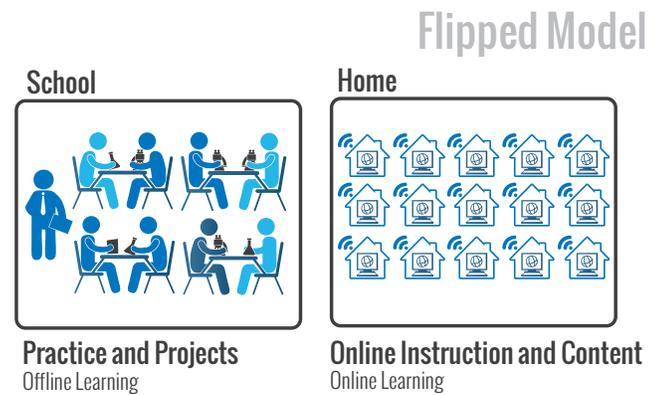
The diagrams below represent three blended models that are currently being used at some level in Greeley-Evans School District 6. Broadening the implementation of these models in all schools will be the focus of the blended learning work over the next 5 years while also encouraging teachers to continue to innovate.

**Station Rotation** - a model implementation in which within a given course or subject (e.g., math), students rotate on a fixed schedule or at the teacher's discretion among classroom-based learning modalities. The rotation includes at least one station for online learning. Other stations might include activities such as small-group or full-class instruction, group projects, individual tutoring, and pencil-and-paper assignments. Some implementations involve the entire class alternating among activities together, whereas others divide the class into small-group or one-by-one

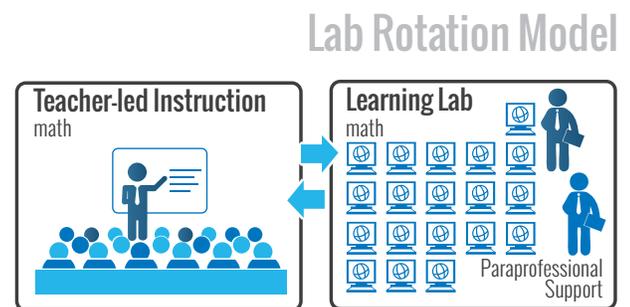


rotations. The station-rotation model differs from the individual-rotation model because students rotate through all of the stations, not only those on their custom schedules (Christensen, 2012).

**Flipped** – a rotation-model implementation in which within a given course or subject (e.g., math), students rotate on a fixed schedule between face-to-face teacher-guided practice (or projects) on campus during the standard school day and online delivery of content and instruction of the same subject from a remote location (often home) after school. The primary delivery of content and instruction is online, which differentiates a flipped classroom from students who are merely doing homework practice online at night. The flipped-classroom model aligns with the idea that blended learning includes some element of student control over time, place, path, and/or pace because the model allows students to choose the location where they receive content and instruction online and to control the pace at which they move through the online elements (Christensen, 2012).



**Lab Rotation** – a rotation-model implementation in which within a given course or subject (e.g., math), students rotate on a fixed schedule or at the teacher’s discretion among locations on the brick-and-mortar campus. At least one of these spaces is a learning lab for predominantly online learning, while the additional classroom(s) house other learning modalities. The lab-rotation model differs from the station-rotation model because students rotate among locations on the campus instead of staying in one classroom for the blended course or subject (Christensen, 2012).



## Benefits

### For students:

- Promotes independent, self-motivated learning
- Encourages higher levels of engagement
- Relevancy: it allows students to apply their learning to real-world applications
- Individualized learning: students can speed up or slow down their pace depending on individual needs
- Remaining with their age-level peers while accessing higher-level content
- Learning is tailored to an individual’s interests and preferred learning style
- Learning can happen anywhere, at any time, while giving students access to global experts and information
- Mirror their learning to the world of work
- Real-time feedback is readily available
- Post-secondary workforce readiness, whether attending college or pursuing jobs after graduation

### For teachers:

- Real-time access to student data to better meet the individual needs of students
- Computer scoring much of a student's work, frees teachers to focus on higher value student interactions like providing individualized coaching, teaching and support, and leading group learning

### For parents:

- Real-time access to their student's progress towards standards mastery
- The comfort of knowing their children are being prepared with skills that are utilized at colleges and universities nationwide and in the workforce

### For community:

- Students are prepared to enter the 21st Century workforce
- Opportunities to partner with schools to support a model of learning that will be noted on a national level

## PROJECT OUTLINE

### District-Coordinated Approach

In a district-coordinated approach, the vision, goals and criteria for implementation are developed for the system. Support structures are created for schools, as well as assurances that blended learning is aligned with state standards and the best instructional practices. This approach also ensures schools and teachers enjoy considerable flexibility in choosing which model/models will best meet the needs of their classrooms and maximize student achievement. This approach also supports teachers who want to push innovation by providing them tools to identify a learning challenge they want to address in their classrooms.

Greeley-Evans School District 6 strongly believes blended learning is the best district-wide strategy for improving achievement for all students. By partnering our talented teachers with technology's unique abilities and power, we're confident we have a winning formula for ensuring our students are prepared for college and careers. The Learning Accelerator brings experience, wise counsel and a powerful network that will help us move forward faster, and with better results. We each bring unique assets and believe blended learning will achieve outstanding results for students, teachers and our community.

### Criteria

As teachers and school leaders think about innovative blended treatments, the following criteria serve as a guide to focus their designs to address the most critical barriers to accelerating student progress and providing more opportunities for deep learning.

- **Mastery and competency** – Students have multiple opportunities to fill learning gaps and learn grade-level and above standards using a variety of modalities
- **Time** – Learning can be extended beyond the traditional school day or year
- **Pace** – Students rate of learning is based on their individual needs
- **Place** – Students have access to their learning outside the walls of the classroom
- **Path** – Interactive and adaptive software allows students to learn in a method that is customized to their needs
- **Small group instruction** – The use of technology allows teachers to work with smaller groups of students in order to better differentiate instruction to meet the needs of all students

Below is a bulleted list outlining the spheres of decision making for the implementation of blended learning. This list reflects high aspirations of what we will provide given the availability of financial resources and reflects our deep commitment to the full implementation of blended learning in every school in Greeley-Evans School District 6.

## System Responsibilities

- Lead professional development on blended learning models for teachers and administrators
- Lead school leadership teams in designing blended learning for their school
- Provide a list of blended models for teachers and administrators
- Provide on-going technical support for the technology tools and instructional models (coaching)
- Develop a list of digital content providers
- Provide high-speed internet, wireless access, devices and a data dashboard that aggregates data to inform instruction
- Develop rubrics that reflect what high-quality blended learning looks like for each blended model
- Develop competency-based pre/post-tests
- Develop a document to guide device purchases
- Provide an approval process for innovative teachers or teams who want to be early adopters
- Identify cost of full implementation

## School Responsibilities and Choices

- Lead decision making on which classrooms, grade levels or teams will become blended and in which order over the next 5 years
- Lead the selection of models (or combination of models) at the school level
  - Station rotation (single or complex)
  - Lab rotation
  - Flipped
- Leverage school funds for device purchases
- Apply for external mini-grants to support early adopters
- Support teachers piloting demonstration content
- Monitor implementation to support student learning

## TIMELINE

- March 26, 2014: Launch comprehensive "Digital Citizenship" curriculum
- March 26, 2014: Launch platform in collaboration with CeC and TLA to support innovative early adopter teachers and teacher teams who want to implement blended learning
- April 1, 2014: Provide students with district-issued email accounts
- April 7, 2014: Support transition in iPads provided by the Success Foundation for all middle schools to support the use of the devices to move from technology-rich to blended
- April 24, 2014: Present a recommendation to the Board of Education for a Learning Management System that will become the platform to launch our blended learning efforts
- May 9, 2014: Complete site readiness assessments and create a prioritized list of schools to target for blended learning
- May 30, 2014: Complete WAN (Wide Area Network) upgrade

## Year 1: 2014-2015

- Summer 2014: Provide professional development in partnership with the Colorado eLearning Collaborative to teachers and principals to support the implementation of blended models and build capacity
- Summer 2014: Install additional wireless access points in schools based upon the priority list
- Fall 2014: Continue the development of ENGAGE into a next generation school transitioning from online to enhanced virtual to individual rotation
- Fall 2014: Develop a blended learning proof point at Bella Romero Academy of Applied Technology in grades 6-8 supported by EdElements
- Fall 2014: Implement blended learning in schools on prioritized list where there is capacity

### Spring 2015

- January, February, March: Assess proof points
- January, February, March: Develop 3-year plan including full budget to implement blended models across all schools in Greeley-Evans School District 6

## Years 2, 3 and 4: 2015-2018

- District-wide implementation of blended learning models

## Year 5: 2018-2019

- Next generation learning models supported by 1:1 ratio of students to devices

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### Works Cited

Christensen Institute. (May, 2012). Classifying K-12 blended learning [White Paper]. Retrieved from <http://www.christenseninstitute.org/publications/classifying-k-12-citinblended-learning-2/>