



# Statewide Online Education Program

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# 1. PROGRAM OVERVIEW

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## COURSES À LA CARTE

The Statewide Online Education Program (SOEP) allows students expanded access to online coursework in an environment which replicates the rich instructional setting available to students attending fully virtual public schools full-time.

**The Statewide Online Education Program (SOEP)** allows students in grades 6-12 enrolled in a secondary environment to earn 9th–12th grade graduation credit in a rich instructional environment otherwise almost exclusively available to students choosing to enroll full-time in an online school. The program opens this option to all qualified students. Students qualify for participation through secondary enrollment in a Utah public, private, or home school.

**Credits earned in online** courses are applied toward graduation at the student’s primary school of enrollment. All online course providers are public schools accredited for 9th–12th grade education, which allows direct acceptance of credit. With 24 credits required for high school graduation, SOEP allows students online access of up to six (6) credits per school year, while schools typically allow students to engage in up to eight (8) yearly credits overall. Regardless of the number of online credits that the student chooses to engage in, however, he/she maintains regular enrollment at his/her boundary school, home or private school, or other or school of choice. If the student attends a public or private school, essential services such as graduation and access to a counselor are uniquely available at this school, as are co-curricular activities such as choir and band, extracurricular activities, and sports participation. *Community and peer relationships built and maintained in the familiar environment of the neighborhood school or other school of choice can be continued even while the student studies online.* Students can access curriculum and instruction unique to their neighborhood school or other school of choice, while also accessing curriculum and instruction unique to an online course provider. The program enhances the availability of quality, online curriculum and instruction, and extends resources available to students choosing to remain in a traditional environment for social or other reasons.

**A student does not need to physically attend courses** at his/her primary school of enrollment to participate in SOEP courses; still, it is most likely that a student will want to take advantage offerings of his/her primary school of enrollment regardless of

participation in SOEP courses. SOEP providers enroll students only *course-wise*, and students are not eligible for additional services from the provider, including sports, extra- or co-curricular participation, or graduation. What the student can access is online coursework otherwise available only to students regularly enrolled in these online schools, *supplementing courses that their primary school of enrollment offers them directly*. SOEP participation thus allows a student to experience the best of both worlds by allowing the student to choose the extent that they wish to participate in each school.

**Civil Rights obligations require schools** to offer equitable opportunities even in a high-cost environment such as a rural area or charter school, where pupil-teacher ratios may be low, driving up costs of offerings courses like advanced science and mathematics, Advanced Placement, and foreign languages.

**Schools can benefit financially** by *show-casing* online alternatives. According to statewide financial data submitted in the 2016-2017 school year, on average schools are funded 20% above course costs, when no restricted varieties of funding (such as special education funding, or funding restricted for facilities or legal costs) are considered. Courses are only paid for if the student earns credit.

**A range of online opportunities are available to all enrolled students.** From San Juan, Uintah and Juab School Districts at the state's edges to Salt Lake and Canyons School Districts on the Wasatch Front, students may participate in this program regardless of the online options offered by their primary school of enrollment.

**Online course providers comply with state and federal law** and Utah State Board of Education Administrative Rule regarding interaction with K-12 students. Students participate in this program through their primary school of enrollment. Online course providers comply with state and federal law and Utah State Board of Education Rule. as they serve these students. *Students have twenty school days to withdraw without penalty.*

**Younger students need an Early Graduation Plan** when enrolled in advanced courses through SOEP. They need to visit their school counselor to obtain a *plan for early graduation*. This will allow for credit earned prior to the 9<sup>th</sup> grade to be accepted for purposes of high school graduation. *Counselors will need to:* (1) mark the student as an Early Graduate each year in the school's student Information system (SIS), and (2) increase "Days Membership" using USBE's Pupil Accounting Rule R277-419-6 as a guide for making computations for course-credit equivalents. This rule allows that an early graduation student may be counted for more than 180 days of regular membership in accordance with the student's early graduation - education plan. An LEA will calculate the days in membership using a method equivalent to the following: total clock hours of instruction for which the student was enrolled during the school year divided by 990 hours multiplied by 180 days, and finally rounded up to the nearest whole day. For example, if a student was enrolled for only 900 hours during the school year, the student's aggregate membership is  $(900/990)*180$ , and the LEA would report 164 days. For each 1.0 credit course that a student is enrolled in excess of full-time enrollment, membership should be increased by  $(1/8)*180$  or 22.5 days, for example. If the student had been in full-time enrollment at their primary school of enrollment for a full 180 days, days membership including the 1.0 credit SOEP course would be 202.5 days.

## 2. PROGRAM PROVIDERS & BENEFIT TO YOUR SCHOOL



### THE STATEWIDE ONLINE EDUCATION PROGRAM (SOEP)

**THE SOEP** allows students to complete 9th–12th grade courses with selected accredited online schools (“online course providers”) that have agreed to accept students of a companion school (“primary school of enrollment”) for limited course-wise enrollment without greater responsibilities for counseling, graduation, or other services, excepting special education services directly related to course content or delivery. The Utah State Board of Education mediates this relationship by providing a secure interface (SEATS) for the transfer of student data. The USBE also manages payment services.

### PROVIDERS

**All online providers** are accredited for 9th–12th grade and distance education, and all online curriculum and instruction must conform to standards applied to Utah schools generally. Curriculum is consistent with Utah core and graduation standards and assigned teachers must be licensed. Providers administer state-mandated assessments for students completing core courses, and test scores accrue to the accountability ratings of online course provider schools. For students having special needs, an IEP team formed by the student’s primary school of enrollment (optimally including representation by the online provider) oversees student participation. With these safeguards in place, a primary school of enrollment is thus required to facilitate student enrollment with eligible providers selected by an eligible student consistent with course credit limits (R277-726-5(1)). The following entities may apply to the USBE for approval to offer online courses to eligible students through the Statewide Online Education Program:

- ¥ A charter school or district school created exclusively for serving students online
- ¥ An LEA created exclusively to serving students online.
- ¥ A program of a public higher education institution offering secondary courses online.

**A list of providers**, with links to each provider’s course catalog, is available on the Utah State Board of Education’s SOEP web page (<http://www.schools.utah.gov/edonline>). *Secondary schools statewide are required to include written notice of SOEP opportunities along with registration materials.*

**SOEP online providers** use technology to aggregate students from across the state to optimize pupil-to-teacher ratios and bring down instructional costs. And while typically more than ninety percent of students do complete coursework in a timely fashion, courses may remain open beyond traditional timelines to allow students to complete credit. Students may also complete coursework ahead of schedule. Canyons Virtual High and Provo eSchool accept students on a rolling basis, and some providers remain open for business in the summer months (the ability to offer courses in the summer is indicated on the USOE’s website). Driver Education is offered, as is ACT preparation, Arabic, Chinese, Latin, C++ Programming and a diverse range of other courses. Approximately 40 percent of participating students take core language arts, mathematics and science courses, while slightly fewer choose foreign languages. Average cost of courses is 35 percent lower than the average expenditure of schools on instruction, per credit hour, allowing the primary school of enrollment to direct remaining funding into other areas of importance.

## THE USOE WEBSITE

A student or parent who wants to register in online courses must visit the USOE’s website (<http://www.schools.utah.gov/main/>) to file an enrollment request. The Utah State Board of Education (USBE) maintains this website devoted to the SOEP program to inform families of available courses and providers, and to allow students to enroll in online courses.

1. The link to the SOEP program is found to the far right on the USOE’s main page under “Popular Links” and titled **Online Education Program** (<http://www.schools.utah.gov/edonline/>).
2. Once parents reach this point, the Public Education Online (Statewide Online Education Program) logo is clearly visible. At the left-hand side of the screen, parents

**The USBE's website:**  
<http://www.schools.utah.gov/main/>

**The Online Education Program:**  
<http://www.schools.utah.gov/edonline/>

can choose the option “**Students and Parents**” from the list.

3. Under **Registration** in the Students and Parents window (<http://www.schools.utah.gov/edonline>) there is a link to **online course providers** as well as a link to the USOE’s Student Enrollment and Tracking System (SEATS). An enrollment request may be filed by using the “**SOEP Utah Public Education Online Enrollment by Course**” link to reach the SEATS application window (<https://seats.schools.utah.gov/>).

**SEATS application:**  
<https://seats.schools.utah.gov/>

Students are encouraged to work with a counselor or a provider when filing enrollment requests to ensure that courses selected effectively move students toward fulfillment of graduation requirements.

## COURSE COST

The cost of courses produced by your district or charter school depends primarily on staffing and facility costs associated with providing that course. On average, statewide, for Charter Schools, current expenditures per pupil per semester credit averaged \$382 per each semester credit (assuming an 8-credit day, which is typically considered to be full-time enrollment) in the most recent fiscal year for which data is available. This includes only “Current Expenditures,” which include Instruction (1000), Support Services (2000), Non-instructional Services (3000) (except for Community Services [3300]), and Direct Program Support. Weighted average cost of courses provided through the Statewide Online Education Program was \$342 in the 2017-18 school year – representing a 14% savings in relation to an average charter school’s ability to provide an equivalent experience. Courses include contact with a licensed teacher, special education accommodations and assessment on par with any other course taught by a public LEA – elements not found with vendor alternatives. Most providers in this program (all providers are public schools) average a pass rate between 90 and 100%, in part because of the rich support offered to students, who are integrated into classrooms and incorporated into accountability scores alongside these providers’ own students.

If we consider total unrestricted revenue received, on average, per Charter School, per student per semester credit, this totaled \$381 in the 2016-17 school year, in which case the percentage of revenue received over cost paid out in terms of the weighted average cost of online courses was 28%. This funding “margin” is retained to cover services to your students, including facility costs. If we consider total funding, this margin rises to 39%.

The *key to taking advantage of these benefits* is to determine what high-cost courses can be advertised as “available online,” in the Spring, as the school advertises courses in published Registration Materials, and includes information on how to access Statewide Online Education Program Enrollment options.

## THE REQUEST FOR ENROLLMENT

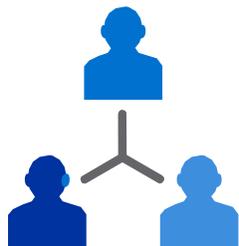
**Because the enrollment process takes approximately ten business days, students are encouraged to register long before courses begin.** Most providers only allow students to enter courses at the beginning of quarters and semester. Students are encouraged to enroll in all courses (online and brick-and-mortar) at one time, to allow for effective coordination of services between the two cooperating schools.

At the point when a **request for enrollment** is filed within SEATS, an e-mail notice is generated which apprises the counselor, provider, and primary school district or charter school's approving official that an enrollment request is pending for their review(s). This fulfills the statutory requirement that the USOE must notify a primary LEA of enrollment or an online course provider that an enrollment request has been received (53A-15-1208).

At the point when a **course credit acknowledgment** has been accepted by both a primary LEA and a provider, the USOE provides an e-mailed notice that the online course provider has accepted the course credit acknowledgment, allowing the student's counselor to forward the student's IEP and 504 information to the provider (53A-15-1208) and allowing a counselor to immediately adjust membership as required by administrative rule. In consequence, the e-mail notice is addressed to the counselor and copied to the provider, parent, and designated approving officer of the primary LEA.

Notice of **student withdrawal** is usually provided only within the SEATS system, which a parent, counselor, and primary LEA may access. If a student withdraws during allowable time periods, no funding is associated with that course enrollment, and this credit may be replaced with an equal credit value. Students may withdraw up to 20 school days after receipt of a notice of enrollment. If the student wishes to withdraw, he/she should notify his/her counselor, who should immediately notify the USOE by e-mail at [edonline@schools.utah.gov](mailto:edonline@schools.utah.gov).

# 3. SEATS—Student Enrollment and Tracking System



The Utah State Board of Education's **SEATS (Student Enrollment and Tracking System)** is an online application allowing multiple persons to interact with one another to file and approve enrollment requests, and to track a student's progress toward completion thereafter. Access to the SEATS database is available to three levels of users:

1. **Counselor** (school-wide access)
2. **Primary** (LEA-wide access), including:
  - ] Business officer (default) or other approving official upon written notice from business officer
3. **Provider** (provider-specific access), including:
  - ] Provider approving officer
  - ] Provider superintendent or director
4. **Registrar** (school-wide read only access)

In order to request access to the USBE's SEATS database, counselors, registrars and district-level approving or other officials are invited to initiate an account and request access. Once a user registers, he/she is asked to click on a link contained in a confirmation e-mail. If users do not receive the confirmation e-mail or have other difficulties, they should contact the USBE's SOEP specialist Dr. Cory Kanth at 801.538.7660 or e-mail [edonline@schools.utah.gov](mailto:edonline@schools.utah.gov) for assistance.

