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New Study Finds Significant International Growth in K-12 Online Learning
“Online and Blended Learning: A Survey of Policy and Practice of K-12 Schools Around the World,” released at iNACOL’s Virtual School Symposium

(INDIANAPOLIS, November 9) – The International Association for K-12 Online Learning (iNACOL) announced the release of a new study reporting significant growth for online and blended-learning models of K-12 education, not only in the United States but around the world.

The study, *Online and Blended Learning: A Survey of Policy and Practice of K-12 Schools Around the World*, was released today in Indianapolis at the Virtual School Symposium (November 9-11), iNACOL’s annual conference. The study’s authors found that almost 60 percent of the more than 60 countries included in the study reported government funding for blended-learning or full-time online programs at the primary and secondary levels.

“Primary and secondary school students today are using the Internet for research, accessing greater resources and original sources, collaborating with students, teachers and experts and creating their own content. More than half of high school students are creators of content. Online learning is emerging as a powerful force for tapping this phenomenon to transform the way our students learn for the 21st century, via highly personalized instruction and performance-based models of assessment,” said Susan Patrick, President and CEO of iNACOL.

The report uncovers several trends. Among them, it finds that adoption is mostly via online and blended-learning programs, or programs that combine online learning with face-to-face student-teacher interactions. Teacher training for online learning is currently required in 25 percent of the countries surveyed.

Among a number of other findings, iNACOL reports:

- Almost 60 percent of the surveyed countries reported government funding for blended or online programs at the primary and secondary levels.
- China’s first online school was created in 1996; today it has expanded to more than 200 online schools with enrollments exceeding 600,000 students.

- Seventy-two percent of the surveyed countries reported that their online and blended classroom teachers participated in professional development for online teaching.
- Universities and colleges were reported as the primary source of training for educators, followed by regional centers and local schools.
- In British Columbia, online schools provide complete programs or individual courses to 71,000 students, which is about 12% of the student population.
- In 2010, Hong Kong enacted a policy recommendation for digital learning that “debundled” textbooks and teaching materials to make them more affordable and accessible to schools, and accelerated the development of an online depository of curriculum-based learning and teaching resources. A pilot scheme later resulted in a program made available to all 410,000 primary and secondary students in 300,000 low-income families—especially the 8 percent without Internet access at home—to gain access to the Internet for the purpose of learning.

Online and Blended Learning: A Survey of Policy and Practice of K-12 Schools Around the World is available online at the iNACOL Online Bookstore: <http://www.inacol.org/research/bookstore/index.php> or at the iNACOL Annual Conference, the Virtual School Symposium, November 9-11, 2011 at the JW Marriott Indianapolis.

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About iNACOL

iNACOL is the International Association for K-12 Online Learning, a non-profit 501(c)(3) membership association based in the Washington, DC area with more than 3,800 members. iNACOL is unique in that its members represent a diverse cross-section of K-12 education from school districts, charter schools, state education agencies, non-profit organizations, colleges, universities and research institutions, corporate entities and other content and technology providers (www.inacol.org).