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Contact: Susan Patrick  
(202) 441-5780

### **NACOL Releases *National Standards of Quality for Online Courses***

WASHINGTON—Today the North American Council for Online Learning (NACOL) released a new publication, *National Standards of Quality for Online Courses*.

The standards selected are based on the results of a research review and survey of online course quality criteria. These quality standards were evaluated and assembled into an easy to use document for evaluating online courses with common benchmarks.

“Our overall goal is to ensure that every student has access to the highest quality education available today. Standards help ensure the quality and consistency of online learning in K-12,” said Susan Patrick, President and CEO of NACOL. “The *National Standards of Quality for Online Courses* offers an important measuring tool to help policy leaders, schools, and parents across the nation evaluate course quality and implement best practices.”

NACOL conducted a comprehensive review of course standards available. Based on this review, the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) *Standards for Quality Online Courses*, used by the 16 states in the southern United States is adopted as the source for the NACOL *National Standards for Quality for Online Courses*. NACOL added a standard to include 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills.

“The use of the Web (online learning) to provide academic courses is extremely important to students everywhere. For online learning to expand and grow, students, parents and policy- and decision-makers need assurance that the online courses are of quality. If providers of online courses meet these standards, there is little doubt that online learning will grow rapidly,” said Bill Thomas, Director of Educational Technology, SREB. NACOL is building upon and validating the quality online learning/virtual school work of SREB to help programs nationally.

As a proven, practical method to enhance the critical learning experience, K-12 online learning is growing rapidly, 30% annually. Online learning levels the playing field for all students to access high quality courses and teachers.

The *National Standards of Quality for Online Courses* are available on NACOL’s website: [www.nacol.org](http://www.nacol.org).

About NACOL

NACOL’s mission is to increase educational opportunities and to enhance learning by providing collegial expertise and leadership in the K-12 online teaching and learning. For more information, visit [www.nacol.org](http://www.nacol.org)