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First school in Idaho history to require online learning

Sugar-Salem puts priority in 21st century learning

Madison County, ID – In a historic move, the Sugar-Salem School District becomes the first in Idaho to mandate online learning as a requirement for high school graduation.

Beginning next school year, in partnership with Idaho Digital Learning (IDLA), all students graduating in 2013, or later, will need to complete one online credit to graduate.

“This is where education is heading,” said Alan Dunn, Sugar-Salem Superintendent. “Children have to learn how to negotiate this online world in which we live. We want them to learn now, in a structured environment and with the help and support of Idaho Digital Learning.”

Currently Michigan, Alabama and New Mexico require all graduating students statewide to take an online course. Sugar-Salem is the first district in Idaho to adopt such a policy.

“This is recognition that online learning is a key component in 21st Century learning,” said Donna Hutchison, CEO for Idaho Digital Learning Academy. “Taking an online class in high school prepares students for learning in college, industry, and life.”

Next year’s 9th grade class will be the first required to take at least one online course. If taken through IDLA, the class will be paid for by the district.

“Our goal is to better prepare our students for college or post-secondary school. I think that’s what our goal should *always* be is to prepare students for the next step,” said Sugar-Salem High School Principal, Jared Jenks.

The Sugar-Salem School District, near Rexburg, has approximately 1,500 students, including 410 high school students.

Idaho Digital Learning, through which the online courses will be taught, is the state-sanctioned online school serving nearly 100% of Idaho school districts.

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