

# Local Facilitator Handbook



CESA 10 Distance Learning Online Services  
in partnership with  
Digital Districts Online



**2006 – 2007 Guidelines and Information for Local  
Facilitators Guiding Online K12 Students**

**DDO Member Districts:**

**CESA 10 Distance Learning Services:**

**CADENC**

*Augusta High School  
Bloomer High School  
Chippewa Falls High School  
Durand High School  
Elk Mound High School  
Fall Creek High School  
Gilmanton High School  
Mondovi High School*

**CWETN**

*Athens High School  
Granton High School  
Greenwood High School  
Edgar High School  
Loyal High School  
Neillsville High School  
Owen-Withee High School  
Spencer High School  
Stratford High School*

**Project CIRCUIT**

*Alma Center Humbird Merrillean High School  
Arcadia High School  
Blair Taylor High School  
Eleva Strum High School  
Gale-Eitrick-Trempeleau High School  
Independence High School  
Osseo Fairchild High School  
Whitehall High School*

**WIN**

*Bruce High School  
Cadott High School  
Cornell High School  
Flambeau High School  
Lake Holcombe High School  
New Auburn High School  
Stanley-Boyd High School  
Thorp High School  
Weyerhaeuser High School*

*Forms and handbooks can be found at the CESA 10 website,  
<http://www.cesa10.k12.wi.us>, and at [www.digitaldistricts.org](http://www.digitaldistricts.org).*

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# Introduction

*We welcome you as a CESA 10 Local Facilitator*

## **About Distance Learning Online Services**

Online learning is a way to offer alternatives and curricular equity for students. The CESA 10 Distance Learning staff will work together with districts as they redefine student course delivery. The online service will offer student courses, professional development and consulting. Rather than creating a virtual school, the online service will provide quality, convenient and cost effective instruction within the supportive structure of the learner's home district.

Member districts belong to one of the four CESA 10 Distance Learning Networks: CADENC, CWETN, Project CIRCUIT or WIN. These districts also belong to Digital Districts Online (DDO). Some DDO documents have been modified with permission to fit the CESA 10 consortium. CESA 10 districts can take courses listed in the DDO portal and additional courses listed in the Distance Learning Services course catalog.

CESA 10 will work with the current distance learning networks to offer video and online classes and continue to serve as the fiscal agent.

CESA 10 in partnership with Digital Districts Online (DDO) will provide shared resources for its members with a goal of serving as a quality, convenient and cost efficient one-stop-shop for online learning.

## **Philosophy Statement**

CESA 10 Distance Learning Services endorses DDO's philosophy for online learning:

DDO has two core principles: (1) to supplement existing district programs, not compete with them and (2) to be responsive to and representative of its members and their needs.

We also believe that: (1) all students should have access to the educational opportunities they need, when they need it and (2) that member districts will respect the unique difference of each institution and support a management concept that conducts business through consensus.

# Getting Started....

## All You Ever Wanted to Know about CESA 10/DDO Local Facilitators

### What is a Local Facilitator?

A “CESA 10 ..... Local Facilitator” is defined by as: an employee of a member school district, acting as a mentor/guide responsible for overseeing students taking online courses.

The importance of having an adult who is responsible for overseeing the online student’s progress is vital. Depending on the type of online course taken and the learning style and needs of the student, the role of the Local Facilitator may range from simply that of a ‘caring adult’ who can monitor the work and progress of the student, to a content or topic ‘specialist’ that can give guidance, assistance and technical support to the student.

### How Do I Become a CESA 10 Local Facilitator?

Any employee in a CESA 10 distance learning district can become a Local Facilitator. Certification as a LF indicates that Facilitators have:

#### Technology Skills:

- Knowledge and comfort with a set of basic technology skills (word processing, e-mail, Internet browser skills, file management, and district network access procedures)
- Knowledge of the course/module platform and navigation
- Knowledge of procedures for building and district technical support

#### The Online World:

- Completed any online course, either self-paced or instructor-led
- Completed the DDO Facilitator and DDO Student Orientations

Policy and Procedure:

- Knowledge, understanding and acceptance of the “Local Facilitator Responsibilities” (*DDO Form #2*) as well as DDO Policy and Procedures (DDO Policy and Procedures Handbook is a separate document.)
- Knowledge and understanding of the Student Virtual Driver’s License and other pre-requisite expectations of students before they commit to an online course (student contract, parental permission and items on the Local Facilitator Checklist.)
- Up-to-date information regarding Online Learning Policy and Procedure within the local district (Links to this information is at the DDO Portal)

All certification courses are provided free to eligible staff of DDO Member Districts and are built into the system to help assure student success. All information regarding courses, applications for certification, and policies and procedures may be found at the DDO Portal.

DDO Portal User Registration is required for all Local Facilitator candidates. To register, go to [www.digitaldistricts.org](http://www.digitaldistricts.org), where the Application for Local Facilitator Certification can also be found (*DDO Form #4*.)

The Local Facilitator is the first level of certification and one of a multitude of ways in which educators can become involved in the multiple aspects of online learning.

**Responsibilities of the Local Facilitator**

All students taking courses through CESA 10 Online Services and DDO will need a “Local Facilitator (LF)” who will be responsible to: assure students are prepared for online learning and course pre-requisites, enroll the student, assure students have the necessary materials and support structures, and oversee progress as the student completes the course. The LF is also responsible for granting the credit and grade upon course completion in cooperation with the school’s counselor and/or principal.

The main goal of the LF is to work with students to achieve academic success. The LF responsibilities have been put in place to ensure that there is a system of student support as defined by local district and DDO policies and procedures. The following documents will serve as information and guidance for Local Facilitators and can be found at [www.cesa10.k12.wi.us](http://www.cesa10.k12.wi.us) (follow Online Learning link).

- Local Facilitator Responsibilities (*DDO Form #2*)
- Local Facilitator Preparation Checklist (*DDO Form #3*)
- DDO Policy and Procedures Handbook (located at DDO Portal)
- DDO Student Handbook (located at DDO Portal)

# Helping Student through the Process. . . .

## Procedures, Tips and Tricks for Local Facilitators

### Pre-Course Preparations

When learning online, it is important that students understand that they will have to take an active role in managing their own learning. A survey conducted at the University of Central Florida identified the two qualities most related to success in online learning: time management and self-motivation (Greer et al, 1998.)<sup>1</sup> Many students may be unprepared for the amount of self-discipline required or have unrealistic expectations as to the time, effort, and skills necessary to succeed. In addition, first-time students are often unsure of what the online learning experience entails and unclear about what their role as a learner will be. Yet the online learning process can be highly rewarding for those students who value self-regulated, active learning.

Prospective students need adequate information in order to decide whether online learning will fit with their learning style and skill level. One way to determine which students are good candidates for online learning is to present all of the pertinent information – both good and bad – so that students understand how online learning differs from traditional classroom courses. DDO has developed a two-part student orientation to help students clarify their online course responsibilities and to give them tools to identify whether online learning is a right for them. The orientation is part of the DDO Virtual Driver’s License which all students will be required to obtain before taking their first DDO Online course.

It is your role as a DDO Local Facilitator to provide a realistic preview of the online learning experience. This can have the following benefits:

- Establish role clarity for students
- Develop realistic expectations and coping responses before problems arise
- Identify “at-risk” students or skill development gaps
- Allow students who prefer face-to-face interaction to self-select out, saving time and money for the student and district
- Increase student retention and completion

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<sup>1</sup> Greer, L.B., Hudson, L.I., & Paugh, R. (1998) Student services and success factors for adult, online learners. Paper presented at the annual conference of the international society for the exploration of teaching alternatives. Cocoa Beach, FL., October 14-17, 1998.

## Student Virtual Driver's License

New online students must obtain a DDO Virtual Driver's License (*DDO Form #7*) before they can be enrolled in an online course. The Driver's License certifies that students meet the minimal competencies required by all online learners for any online course offered by DDO. Once received, this license allows students to participate in any DDO courses for which (s)he has been approved. If a student does not pass the Driver's License, your role will be to work with the student to do so.

Each potential student will need to complete the DDO Online Student Orientation as part of the Virtual Driver's License. Instructions for logging into the orientation are available in the Students section of the DDO Portal site at [www.digitaldistricts.org](http://www.digitaldistricts.org).

The orientation is divided into two parts. The first part "**Is Online Learning Right for Me?**" gives a general overview of online learning. This portion of the Student Orientation provides counselors, teachers, and administrators with a tool to measure student readiness. Often students don't understand the rigors or expectations of online course work. This section also provides an overview of how online courses differ from traditional courses and the skills and attitudes that are necessary for being successful.

After completing Part I of the Student Orientation, students should complete the **readiness surveys** provided in the orientation. These are self-surveys that help measure students' technical and independent learning skills. Not all online learning courses or activities are alike, so there is no one formula for determining whether a student will be successful. However, giving students an overview of online learning and having them take a readiness survey will help school staff and students build some awareness of whether the student is ready to move into the world of online learning.

If the student is ready and interested in taking an online course, (s)he should take Part II of the Student Orientation, "**Your Mission Begins: How To Be A Successful Online Student.**" This orientation will provide more information and strategies on how to be successful in completing an online course.

It is important that online learners have good general computer and Internet skills. Without these skills, they may find learning online to be a frustrating experience, which will compromise their ability to be successful. If students are interested in online learning but require a more in-depth preparation for using technology such as email, Internet and online course tools, DDO recommends that you work with students to develop these skills prior to enrollment.

## Student Contract

Students are expected to attend and participate in their online courses as fully as they would attend in a traditional classroom course. Prior to enrollment, students must sign a Student Contract (see CESA 10 Online Documentation) for each online course they are eligible to take. The Student Contract outlines the responsibilities that students need to adopt as online learners. Give each student a copy of the contract and keep one for your records. Review the contract with students if they are falling behind or are not fulfilling their responsibilities.

## Parent Permission Form

DDO districts require that parents sign a Parental Permission Form (*CESA10 Online Documentation*) for each individual online course a student takes. Fill in the form with the course name and class schedule and have the parent or guardian sign the form and return it to you. (Students who are 18 or older can complete the form for themselves.) Keep this form for your records or as designated by your district policy.

## Computer Access

Prior to enrolling a student, make sure that you have arranged for computer access at a scheduled time on a consistent basis. It is essential that students can depend on ample and consistent computer time. This will help a student to establish a study routine and stick to it. Because all (or a large percentage) of the course work is done at the computer, students need at least **one to two hours a day** at the computer. Before enrolling a student in an online course, Facilitators should [in conjunction with the District Contact and Technical Support:]

- Verify that hardware, software, and network requirements are met. (See CESA 10 Online Documentatoin Technical Requirements.)
- Determine location and access schedule for student to work
- If applicable, assure that a student has the necessary assistive technology (screen readers, voice recognition software.)
- Verify that student has obtained an e-mail address or contact your technology coordinator for instructions on how to request a student e-mail account through your district.

## Student Materials

Some online courses require specific instructional materials, such as textbooks, novels, or CDs. Local districts are responsible for providing these materials and should have them in place for the student prior to enrollment. For more information about required materials, refer to the Details section of the DDO Course Catalog at the DDO Portal.

Students should be held accountable for loss or damage to these materials in the same manner as they are held accountable for any school materials. Local Facilitators are responsible for returning materials to the designated district staff upon the student's course completion.

## Final Notes

All forms and documents, as well as the Local Facilitator Preparation Checklist, can be accessed and downloaded from the DDO Member Section of the Digital Districts Online Portal and on the CESA 10 website under Online Documentation.

## **Enrolling a Student**

The Local Facilitator, counselor or principal is responsible for notifying CESA 10 of the class selected by a student. The following procedures are required for each student enrollment.

### ***Getting Ready***

- **Student email**: A student email account is required for all students who will be enrolled for online courses. Local Facilitators are responsible for working with local district staff to obtain student email accounts.
- **Course start dates**: Local Facilitators should only enroll a student when the student is ready and available to take an online course. The period [which varies by vendor] for dropping students will be ineffective if students are enrolled before they are ready to begin a course.

### ***Enrollment at the DDO Portal***

Instructions for student enrollment are outlined in the Member Section of the DDO Portal. Confirmation will be in two stages:

- An immediate email that confirms the enrollment and provides information regarding the course in which you enrolled the student.
- A second email [within 48 hours], once DDO has made arrangement with the course vendor. This email should include all the instructions necessary [with password and login information] for the student to begin the course.

### ***When Course Enrollment is Verified***

- Test the student account information either before, or with the student, to assure that login and password information is working.
- Contact the Online Teacher to inform him/her that you are the assigned Local Facilitator and that you would like to be contacted on a consistent basis regarding student problems or concerns. Voice any concerns you have and develop some strategies together to address them.
- Communicate any special needs or accommodations your student may require to the Online Teacher

## **Course Delivery**

A strong start is essential to student success and course completion. Students should begin the course with a solid orientation, establish a consistent study schedule, and receive quick resolution to any problems or issues that arise. Ongoing encouragement and timely support are key factors in student success.

### ***Beginning the Course***

**Step 1: Prepare a file folder for each student.** This should be the place where students store all of the important information for their course. The student folder should include the Student Contract and the DDO Student Handbook in which the student should record the course web site, login, Online Teacher, Local Facilitator (LF), and District Contact (DC) information. Students should use the file folder to store all course information, notes, and printouts. Include print-outs of tutorials that step through the course login process and email instructions.

**Step 2: Set up a time to orient the student to the course.** Go over the contents of the student folder to explain the purpose of each item as well as the login procedures for the course. Before students begin the actual course, they should complete the **course orientation** that is located in the course and complete all activities contained in the course orientation.

**Step 3: Inform students of the course drop period.** Students have a window of time [which varies by vendor] to drop the course without consequences or financial commitment to the school. *Clearly communicate to the students that if they do not make progress as expected in the period of the course, they risk being dropped. If the student does not meet these expectations, notify DDO to drop the student within this period.*

**Step 4: Begin the course.** Have the student access the main course area. Determine any problems regarding access, course software, or content.

**Step 5: Establish a completion schedule for the course.**

If a course is group-paced, the assignment schedule is already determined. Print out the assignment schedule and monitor student progress on a consistent basis. Self-paced courses do not have set assignment schedules, so it is important to establish a schedule with each student. A couple of strategies for monitoring student progress in a self-paced course are:

- 1) Print out the electronic grade book which lists all of the graded assignment and assign completion dates for each,
- 2) Contact the online teacher and request the assignment schedule, and
- 3) Have your students email you when they submit assignments.

**Step 6: If applicable, orient students to the online grade book.** Most online courses provide a grade book that is accessible by the student. Demonstrate how the grade book works. Schedule a time of the week when you will check student progress with the student. It is important that students know that you will continually monitor their progress through the online grade book.

**Step 7: Review the student responsibilities located in the Student Handbook.** These include Student Policies, Study and Management Tips, the Student Contract, and Student Responsibilities for Online Courses.

**Step 8: Establish communication with the online teacher.** (Keep the name and email address handy!) Specifically mention individual student needs and what (s)he should be aware of in working with the student. Notify the online teacher that you wish to be informed about student problems or concerns and that you wish to be contacted on a consistent basis.

### *Monitoring the Progress*

**Establish requirements for first two weeks.** Outline the minimum requirements expected in the first two weeks of the course. To ensure that students are aware of this commitment, consider the three-part process below:

- If the student does not complete the expected number of assignment in the first seven (7) days of the course enrollment period, notify the student of the unacceptable pace for submitting assignments.
- If the student does not respond by completing assignments, work in conjunction with the online instructor to warn the student of the potential of being dropped from the course.
- If the student does not respond by completing assignments within the first two weeks of the course [or before, if the drop-period is less than two weeks], notify DDO to drop the student immediately.

**Maintain records of student progress and problems.** Encourage students to review the assignment checklist to see if they are keeping pace with the course or module requirements. Print out course grade books as needed to see if students are keeping up with the course.

**Maintain student files that document progress.** Keep records of online teachers' names and email, weekly grade books, technical problems, email communications with the student and online teacher, assignment checklists, and any course modifications.

**Develop an action plan for students in need of intervention.** If students are having a difficult time with the pace of the course, you will need to assess the learning process and help students resolve their problems. Contact the Online Teacher to voice your concerns and develop some strategies together to assist the student and possibly make modifications to the assignments and activities.

**Encourage students to report any technical problems.** If the student has Internet or other computer access problems, refer the problem to the school technician or district technical support services. If the problem persists, contact the DDO District Contact.

**Proctor all quizzes and exams.** If students are doing homework at home, make it clear that they should do all quizzes and exams under your supervision. If there is an indication that a student may not be performing his/her own work, follow local district procedures and policies related to these issues.

### ***If the Student is Having Problems***

Online courses require a certain stick-with-it-ness on the part of the student. Students may appear to be actively involved in the course, but may actually be falling behind or losing interest. Local Facilitators have an important role in providing students with the encouragement, support, and direction to keep them motivated and willing to complete a course. Whatever the problems, the Local Facilitator should be there to help identify the issues and work to resolve them. Here are some suggestions for working through problems as they arise:

1. Identify the problems. Are they related to behavior, attendance, motivation, study skills, assignment completion, or adjusting to the online world?
2. Schedule time to meet with the student to discuss the problems and possible solutions.
3. Before meeting with the student, establish concrete examples of the problem for the student. Here are some suggestions for clarifying the issues:
4. Contact the Online Teacher to help define what the gaps are and what needs to be done to keep pace with the course schedule.
5. Print out any assignments or work that demonstrates learning gaps or motivational problems.
6. Identify all occurrences of behavioral problems and how they relate to school rules and policies.
7. Print out any documents that will re-establish DDO and local district rules and policies, such as DDO Student Contract, DDO Student Responsibilities, local district policies and procedures.
8. Communicate all appropriate information to the student concerning the identified problems. Suggest solutions in a positive manner.

### ***Behavioral Issues***

Establish specific consequences if inappropriate behavior continues based on local district policies and procedures.

### ***Academic and motivational issues***

- Familiarize yourself with assignments and activities so you are able to assist students. Coach them on how to break down larger written assignments into smaller parts.
- Review the subject matter with students using a variety of methods such as reviewing student notes, questioning, and graphic organizers.

- Coach students in developing strategies that help them think through problems and identify the source of frustrations. Encourage ongoing communication with their teachers as problems and frustrations crop up.
- Encourage students to email their online teacher and local facilitators weekly so that they can communicate their progress and any questions, confusion, and problems they might be having.
- Print out course materials if a student finds it easier to read from printed materials.
- Encourage students to take notes on the important points of the course material. Writing can help some students understand the material and stay more engaged in learning.
- Coach students in staying organized. Students will find it easier to stay organized if they maintain an active student folder. Remind them to keep important documents and information in this folder. Develop an assignment calendar to help students keep pace with the course.

### ***Course Access or Navigation Issues***

- Encourage ongoing communication with their online teachers as problems and frustrations crop up.
- Encourage students to report any technical problems.
- If a student has Internet or other computer access problems, refer the problem to the school technician or district technical support services immediately.
- Have students review the Course Introduction if they are having problems with course navigation and are confused about how to use the course.

### ***Plagiarism or Cheating Issues***

If a student has plagiarized work while enrolled in a DDO course, that student is subject to the policies of their local school regarding cheating or fraud. Plagiarism is defined as: copying or using ideas or words from another online person or an Internet or print sources and presenting them as one's own.

Districts may choose to require that students sign a student code of ethics agreement [with the language that incorporates the online environment, and clearly defines sanctions for abuse of the privilege] to deter potential cheating and to inform students and parents of the consequences. Confirmation of student plagiarism will be subject to consequences by the DDO Leadership Team, with potential removal or course failure.

## **Course Completion**

If local district policy allows, an extension to the course may be requested from DDO, who will work with the vendor to request the extension. Online course providers usually allow 6 months for course completion without additional charge [but policies vary by vendor.]

## ***Credits and Grading***

As the Local Facilitator, you will be responsible for granting and recording the grade and credit for the course. Work with the Online Teacher to determine and translate class work into grades, based on the local district grading system. Honors points, weighting and other special considerations will be made at the discretion of the local school, and should be decided prior to the enrollment of students.

For instance, some schools might assign a letter grade of A- to a 93% while some schools might assign an A. This is a school-based decision. If a student and his or her counselor or LT agrees that a course can be taken Pass/Fail, the school will translate the grade percentage into a Pass/Fail mark.

As Local Facilitator, you will be responsible for reporting the grade and credit to both your district, as well as recording the information at the Digital Districts Portal.

# And Finally.....

*We Thank You for your commitment as a Local Facilitator, assisting our students to expand their educational options*

## **DDO Forms and Handbooks**

**All forms and handbooks referred to in this document can be found as separate PDF Files in the Member Section of the DDO Portal and at the CESA 10 website under Online Documentation:**

- ◆ **DDO Checklists and Forms**
- ◆ **DDO Policy and Procedures**
- ◆ **DDO Student Handbook**

**It will be necessary to download these documents to gain the knowledge and understanding necessary to complete requirements for the Local Facilitator Certification.**