

## WAYNE-FINGER LAKES BOCES/EDUTECH LEARNING TECHNOLOGY GRANT

### Learning Brief: Analysis of AccelerateU Online Course Needs Assessment Survey

May 2021

#### AccelerateU: ONLINE COURSE NEEDS ASSESSMENT SURVEY

**METHODOLOGY.** A link to conduct the Online Course Needs Assessment Survey was sent to 93 active and 810 inactive online learning coordinators affiliated with Wayne-Finger Lakes BOCES/AccelerateU on April 7, 2021. Respondents were given four weeks to respond. A total of **58 online learning coordinators** completed the survey resulting in a 6% response rate and a margin of error equal to +/-12.5% in estimated values of the online learning coordinator population (based on the finite population correction factor at the 95% confidence level).

The objective of the survey was to better understand district's online needs now and in the future. The survey included a total of seven questions that included both multiple response and open-ended questions. The open-ended questions asked respondents why they think they will be utilizing AccelerateU more or less often next school year, their district's plans for online/remote/blended learning in 2021-22, what they like best about AccelerateU's service, and suggestions for improvement. Respondents were also provided the opportunity to write-in additional comments. The open-ended questions were coded to quantify responses.

#### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

##### Question: What is the primary reason(s) preventing your district from enrolling more students in online courses through AccelerateU? (Please check all that apply)

Respondents said the primary reasons preventing their districts from enrolling more students in online courses through AccelerateU were lack of need or interest from students (49%) and the cost of the service (42%). Other respondents mentioned lack of student success (18%), resistance from local teachers, administrators, union (16%), difficulty finding a staff member to manage online learning (4%) and preference for face-to-face instruction (4%). A few respondents mentioned that they are not the person responsible for making online learning decisions (5%). "Other" responses included:

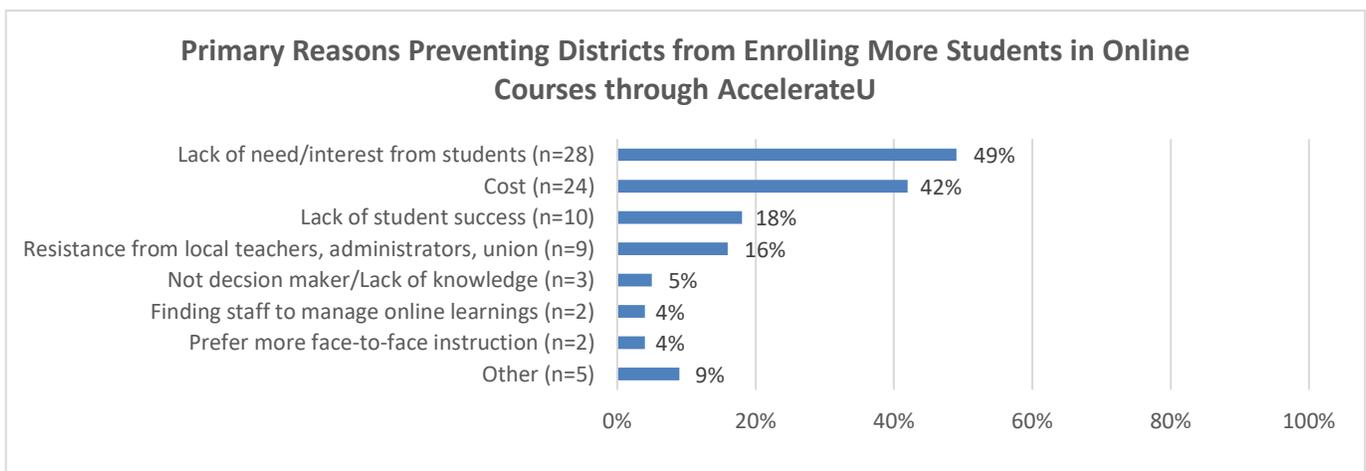
*"Most of my students are not candidates for AU."*

*"We mainly needed AccelerateU for Spanish."*

*"Students are burned out from online learning right now."*

*"We tend to use Gradpoint more."*

*"Hard to communicate with students and get them enrolled."*



**Question: Do you anticipate your district utilizing AccelerateU online courses more, less, or about the same during the next school year (2021-2022)?**

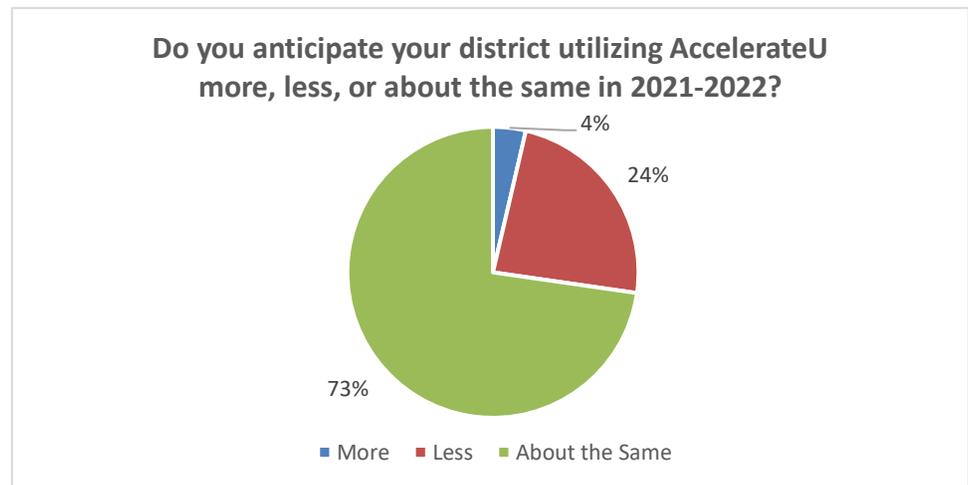
Two respondents (4%) said they anticipate their district utilizing AccelerateU **more often** in 2021-2022. When asked why:

*"The AccelerateU program has increased yearly in our district. More students are doing electives that they would not be able to do in school."*

*"It fills the student's schedule with credit bearing courses."*

Thirteen respondents (24%) said they anticipate their district utilizing AccelerateU **less often** in 2021-2022. When asked why:

- Three respondents indicated less need for remote learning in the coming year.
- Two respondents indicated their participation was related to grant funding that will be ending.
- One respondent said they offered one class to one student and there would be no one interested next year.
- One respondent stated their district is hiring a teacher to teach the course currently provided by AccelerateU.



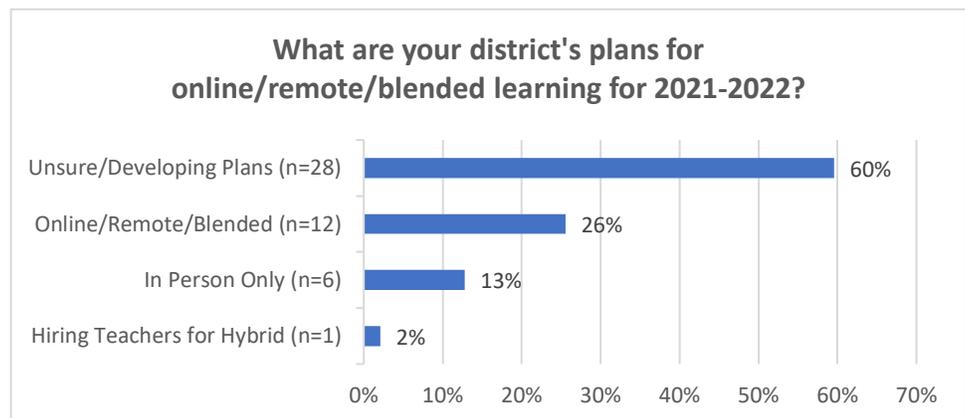
**Question: What are your district's plans for online/remote/blended learning for 2021-2022?**

Sixty percent (60%) of respondents said they are either unsure of their district's plans at this time or currently weighing their options for student learning in 2021-2022.

Twenty-six percent (26%) of respondents said their district plans include an online, remote, or blended learning element. Three of these respondents said they plan to use online learning

for credit recovery and three others specifically mentioned their plan to continue to work with AccelerateU.

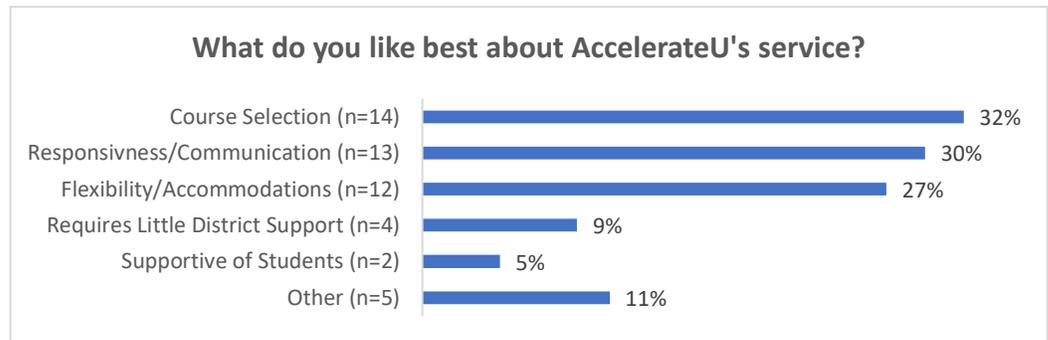
Thirteen percent (13%) of respondents indicated their district would be pursuing in-person learning only next year. One respondent mentioned that their district will be hiring their own teachers for hybrid learning.



**Question: What do you like best about AccelerateU's Service?**

Thirty-two percent (32%) of respondents mentioned **course selection** when asked what they like best about AccelerateU.

*"The ability for students to participate in a course not offered within our school without a need for our own teacher. This provides students an opportunity to explore options beyond our 'world.'"*



Similarly, 30% said they like AccelerateU's **responsiveness/communications** and 27% said they like their **flexibility/accommodations** for students with alternative learning styles.

*"Fantastic support team who helps us navigate the program!!!!"*

*"Flexibility, out of the box thinking, solutions to challenging situations."*

Other respondents mentioned AccelerateU not requiring a lot of district support (9%) and being supportive of students (5%). "Other" positive responses included AP options, cost, convenience, and how students are able to earn credit while continuing grade level instruction.

*"All encompassing. There is very little needed from the district after sign up besides some basic monitoring and reporting."*

There was one negative comment that responded *"Nothing, I was not impressed with the course that I taught. Even with multiple emails/communications saying the book did not line up with the course, nothing changed."*

**Question: What suggestions do you have for improving AccelerateU's service?**

Two-thirds (67%) of all respondents did not have any suggestions for improvement. Nineteen percent (19%) suggested improving AccelerateU's service by increasing teacher face time and/or personal contact with students.

*"I think the face-to-face time with the teacher is key. The content can be online, but the students thrive when they have the daily interaction with the teacher."*

Nine percent (9%) of respondents mentioned providing more detailed information to students, improving AccelerateU's online platform, increasing accommodations for students with IEPs such as scaffolding or differentiated instruction, and offering credit recovery and college courses.

*"Perhaps a FAC document to assist students."*

*"I have had a few issues with students struggling with the interface."*

*"I am not sure if this is possible, but increase ways to support scaffold instruction. It is always of interest to increase ways to make accommodations and modifications for students with IEPs."*

Others suggested reducing the cost (6%), reducing the pace/workload (6%), and problems associated with specific course offerings (6%).

*"The cost is our district's primary concern; otherwise the communication and support for staff and students is great."*

*"Gear courses more towards high school students. Many of our students were overwhelmed with the amount of work and the pace of the course."*

*“Consumer Math is the most popular class our students access. There are some challenges within the course. Previous versions of the course were more user friendly.”*

*“Don’t offer a course if you don’t have access to the correct textbook version.”*

---

**Question: Please provide any additional comments regarding how AccelerateU could better serve your district.**

Only 10 respondents provided a comment. Four of the responses reiterated that AccelerateU is a good service with a helpful support staff. One respondent noted “I think the key is making certain the right students are enrolled.”

---

**DISCUSSION/RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Remind Districts that while we are all planning to be in-person next year, we may experience times when **fully online or hybrid instruction is again necessary**. There are populations of students (medically fragile, for example) who will need this service as we emerge from the Covid-19 pandemic.
- **Student engagement** challenges are documented and AccelerateU product/services may play a role in reengaging vulnerable learners, supporting their efforts to catch up with their age-appropriate peers and personalize learning for students that have struggled to find meaningful connections in the curriculum available in our local schools.
- The need for online learning is not going away and **improvements to infrastructure and broadband only supports** and strengthens this notion. AccelerateU must work with components to assess needs and continue to gauge impact and share those data and findings to further inform District purchasing.
- **Utilize the results** of the Online Learning Coordinator Survey to inform districts on how to best manage and support online learning students.

---

**ANTICIPATED AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT ALLOCATIONS**

Use these data to consider best means to highlight opportunities via AccelerateU, particularly as districts struggle to address Learning Loss and credit recovery/accrual needs and attempt to make smart investments with their Rescue funds. With that in mind, the following allocations are anticipated for Wayne Finger Lakes BOCES component districts.

[https://nyassembly.gov/2021budget/2021files/enacted/2021final\\_school\\_aid.pdf](https://nyassembly.gov/2021budget/2021files/enacted/2021final_school_aid.pdf)

| American Rescue Plan Act District Allocations 2021-2022 |               |                      |
|---|---------------|----------------------|
| DISTRICT  | DISTRICT CODE | AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN |
| Attica CSD  | 670201        | \$3,286,738          |
| Avon CSD  | 240101        | \$1,776,799          |
| East Bloomfield CSD                                     | 430501        | \$1,868,121          |
| Bronxville CSD  | 660303        | \$268,768            |
| Canandaigua City School District                        | 430300        | \$3,572,111          |
| Clyde-Savannah CSD                                      | 650301        | \$3,328,121          |
| Dansville CSD   | 241001        | \$5,042,277          |
| Dundee CSD  | 680801        | \$3,528,292          |
| Elwood UFSD   | 580401        | \$1,909,673          |
| Fishers Island School                                   | 581004        | 0                    |
| Frankfort-Schuyler CSD                                  | 210402        | \$2,595,617          |
| Gananda CSD   | 650902        | \$1,065,295          |

| <b>American Rescue Plan Act District Allocations 2021-2022</b> |                      |                             |
|--|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>DISTRICT</b>  | <b>DISTRICT CODE</b> | <b>AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN</b> |
| Geneseo CSD  | 240401               | \$1,975,321                 |
| Geneva City School District                                    | 430700               | \$6,497,777                 |
| Hilton CSD   | 261101               | \$4,561,056                 |
| Honeoye Falls-Lima CSD   | 431401               | \$1,191,171                 |
| Jefferson CS   | 540901               | \$730,257                   |
| Kendall CSD  | 450607               | \$2,362,604                 |
| Little Falls CS  | 210800               | \$3,573,437                 |
| Livonia CSD  | 240801               | \$2,648,740                 |
| Lyons CSD  | 650501               | \$3,610,114                 |
| Marcus Whitman SD (Gorham-Middlesex)                           | 430901               | \$3,570,972                 |
| Margaretville CS   | 121401               | \$1,136,485                 |
| Marion CSD   | 650701               | \$1,632,652                 |
| Naples CSD   | 431201               | \$1,526,192                 |
| Newark CSD   | 650101               | \$5,663,703                 |
| North Rose-Wolcott CSD   | 651501               | \$4,246,322                 |
| Pavilion CSD   | 181201               | \$2,088,204                 |
| Palmyra-Macedon CSD  | 650901               | \$3,185,760                 |
| Penn Yan CSD   | 680601               | \$4,808,788                 |
| Penfield CSD   | 261201               | \$2,519,832                 |
| Phelps-Clifton Springs CSD                                     | 431301               | \$4,084,511                 |
| Pittsford CSD  | 261401               | \$1,291,694                 |
| Red Creek CSD  | 651503               | \$3,187,546                 |
| Red Jacket CS (Manchester-Shortsville CSD)                     | 431101               | \$1,817,930                 |
| Richfield Springs CSD  | 472001               | \$1,618,064                 |
| Romulus CSD  | 560603               | \$1,305,498                 |
| Salem CSD  | 641501               | \$1,921,550                 |
| Seneca Falls CSD   | 560701               | \$3,042,468                 |
| Sodus CSD  | 651201               | \$4,423,545                 |
| Trumansburg CSD  | 611001               | \$2,316,664                 |
| Tuckahoe CSD   | 660302               | \$315,510                   |
| Victor CSD   | 431701               | \$3,067,196                 |
| Warsaw CSD   | 671501               | \$2,676,953                 |
| Waterloo CSD   | 561006               | \$4,936,653                 |
| Wayland-Cohocton CS  | 573002               | \$4,753,257                 |
| Wayne CSD  | 650801               | \$2,183,750                 |
| Webster CSD  | 261901               | \$5,293,527                 |
| West Canada Valley CSD   | 210302               | \$2,143,225                 |
| Wheatland-Chili CSD  | 262001               | \$1,917,112                 |
| Williamson CSD   | 651402               | \$2,009,570                 |