

# Online learning increases choices for students

Students communicate with their online instructors and virtual classmates through e-mail, discussion questions, voice threads, chat rooms, video conferencing, telephone calls, and some face-to-face meetings.

**Gwinnett County Online Campus (GOC)**— the school system’s new full-time, diploma-granting high school— offers a flexible learning environment, extensive support from teachers and learning coaches, individualized instruction, and a full range of courses.

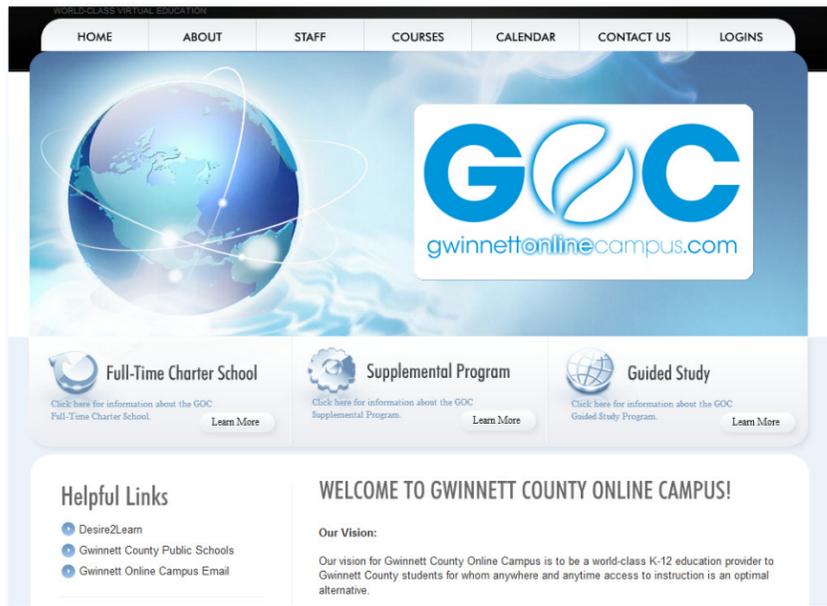
The **virtual high school** opened in August for students in grades 9–12. (GOC middle school opens next year. See the story below.) Like their counterparts in brick-and-mortar schools, GOC students must meet all graduation requirements for credits and assessments. Students

have access to classes in the core academic areas, modern and classical languages, health and PE, and technical education, including Advanced Placement and electives. Unlike traditional high schoolers, GOC students work online at the time of day that works best for their schedule. Twice a month, students visit campus for three hours of hands-on lab exercises to reinforce content and introduce new concepts. During labs, students form study groups and friendships while demonstrating leadership skills.

“Our goal at Gwinnett Online Campus is to provide a dynamic learning experience for our students,” says **Dr. Christopher Ray**, GOC principal. “We continue to work toward designing courses where students have the opportunity to explore, analyze, and apply the content of the courses in a variety of ways.”

## Coming in 2012–13... Gwinnett Online Campus for middle school students!

The *Gwinnett Online Campus full-time middle school* will open for the 2012–13 school year, (with classes open to 4th and 5th graders the following school year). As is the case for the online high school, the majority of school work will be completed off campus, but GOC middle school students also will have face-to-face contact with their teachers on a regular basis, promoting social interaction and reinforcing the skills learned in their virtual classrooms. Full-time students enrolled in the GOC middle grades will be able to take language arts, math, science, social studies, foreign language, and a variety of connections classes unique to the online environment. Check out an information session to learn more about this opportunity for rising 6th–8th graders. (See the meeting schedule on the next page.)



### Students use GOC option to supplement regular schedule

The **GOC Supplemental Program** offers solutions for GCPS students wanting to get ahead or make room in their schedule for additional electives. Students can choose from more than 150 online courses to take outside of their regular class schedule. During 2010–11, nearly 5,000 students took a fee-based online class through the Supplemental Program. Also offered through GOC, **Guided Study courses** are available for students who need to recover credits for a failed class in order to get, and stay, on track for graduation.



### Is online learning a good fit?

For some students, a virtual high school experience is the *perfect* fit. How can you know if GOC is right for your student? Here are some of the qualities that can help make a student successful at GOC:

- **Does the student have access to a computer and the Internet?** Students need 2–3 hours per day for each course in which they are enrolled. (Students take three courses per eight-week mini-semester, completing the year at GOC with the same number of credits as a regular class schedule.) Online, students listen to live and recorded chat sessions, review online content, and complete homework.
- **Is the student a motivated, independent learner? Can he or she handle the accelerated pace of a mini-semester schedule?** While students receive lots of support from teachers and learning coaches, the student must be prepared for a full, quick-moving learning experience. A student who believes GOC will be the “easy way” to earn a diploma will be surprised.

### Attend an information meeting

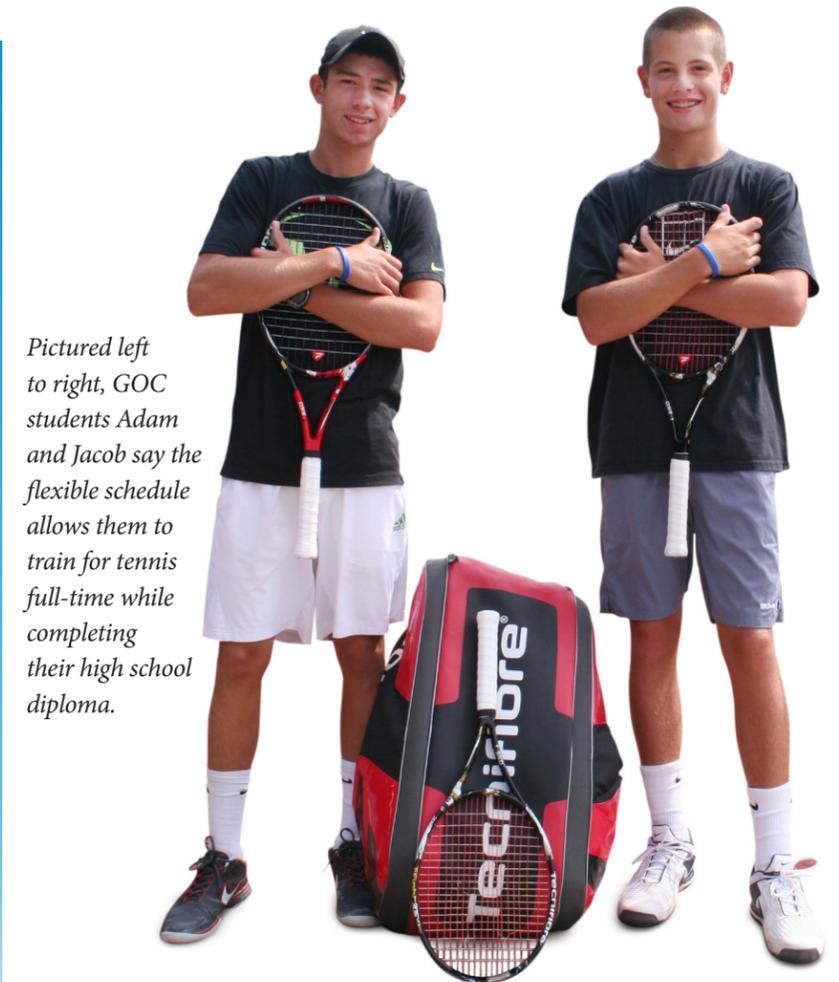
Interested in learning more about Gwinnett’s full-time online learning option? Plan to attend one of the informational meetings listed below. These sessions will provide the information you need to make an informed decision about enrolling at Online Campus full-time.

Middle School Meetings 6:30–7:15 p.m.  
High School Meetings 7:30–8:15 p.m.

- Nov. 3** South Gwinnett High, Theater
- Nov. 17** Parkview High, Theater
- Dec. 1** Meadowcreek High, Theater
- Dec. 8** Central Gwinnett High, Theater
- Jan. 5** Grayson High, Theater
- Jan. 12** Mill Creek High, Theater
- Jan. 19** Collins Hill High, Theater
- Jan. 26** North Gwinnett High, Commons Area
- Feb. 2** Duluth High, Theater

### Plan to register for 2012–13

Registration will run Feb. 1–29, 2012. Watch for more information through the counselor’s office at your local middle or high school and on the GOC website.



Pictured left to right, GOC students Adam and Jacob say the flexible schedule allows them to train for tennis full-time while completing their high school diploma.

## These are our school supplies... ...This is our schedule

*Working actors, competitive athletes, elite musicians, self-motivated scholars, a working teen who supports a family— these are just a few of the students who have found the perfect learning environment to meet their unique situations. Here’s what some GOC students are saying about their first months attending the virtual high school:*

With full-time training schedules, tennis players **Adam** and **Jacob** value the flexibility and the academic support from teachers and learning coaches. “I can complete coursework at my own pace,” says Adam. “It’s not easy and requires a lot of

discipline, but it works for me.” For Jacob, being able to complete work on his schedule means he can be on the court by noon each day.

Another student, **Malachi**, says the ability to work ahead and get extra help when he needs it makes GOC a great fit. **Monica** recommends GOC for students who, like her, can work on their own.

**Nathan** cautions to be prepared for the pace and learning curve, but says the administrators, teachers, and coaches work to make sure everything goes smoothly. “[GOC] really makes me excited about learning.”