

## ALHS Online and the MLC Connection



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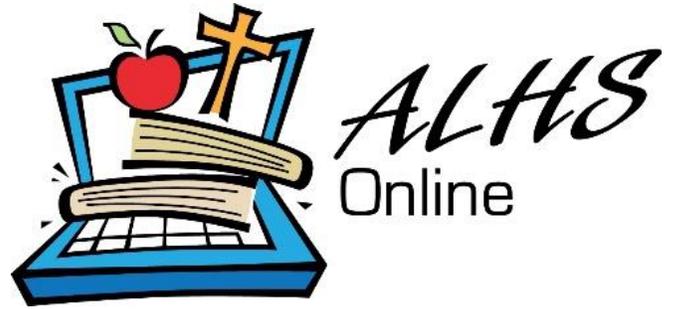
Imagine high school and middle school students being able to attend a course taught from a Christian perspective no matter where they live. With ALHS Online, students can do just that.

ALHS Online is an online course service provider that allows WELS high schools to expand their own curricular offerings in a cost-effective manner. For example, if a school has only one or two students who desire a particular course, it's not cost effective for the school to offer that course. If several students can be pooled together from several different schools, however, the course suddenly becomes feasible. The creation, teaching, and facilitation of these courses is the purpose of ALHS Online.

Here's how it works. The schools pay a small per-student fee. Students access a course by logging onto a website with their own username and password. The instructor breaks the course down into a series of weekly or daily lessons and provides a "lesson guide sheet" to lead the students through each lesson. A typical lesson might include reading a textbook excerpt or an online article, or viewing a recorded lecture. Students participate in written class discussions through a discussion board tool, and they submit their assignments to the instructor for grading. Although students do have deadlines for the various lesson activities, they don't need to access the course at the same time as other students; they can log on whenever it fits their schedule.

ALHS Online began in 2011-12 with two courses the first semester and three the second. About 30 students enrolled each semester, representing eight WELS high schools. Today, enrollment is about 250 student seats spread across 24 courses each semester. Students in 2016-17 come from 21 WELS high schools, 12 Lutheran elementary schools, and several home schools and public schools.

A gracious God has truly blessed ALHS Online. Enrollment has increased by about 60% each year. Nearly 90% of WELS high schools have had students participating. A dedicated core of nearly 20 qualified WELS teachers teach the courses. Some teachers also teach in WELS schools; others are retired teachers, professors, pastors, or stay-at-home parents. And recently, ALHS Online has also begun offering high school Spanish and algebra to qualified middle school students.



Schools, parents, and students are appreciative of ALHS Online, as evidenced by comments like these:

- *Please send the word of appreciation to your board of directors and online teachers who continually develop this online source of education from the Christian education perspective!*
- *ALHSO is a wonderful blessing to our students!*
- *Class was awesome!*
- *It was a fun class, and I learned a lot!*
- *I just really enjoyed this class. 10 for 10!*

Although ALHS Online is an independent, tax-exempt, non-profit corporation, it does have some ties to MLC. MLC hosts and maintains the hardware and software. Many of the ALHS Online instructors completed their teaching degrees and online training through MLC. Three MLC professors (**Peter Baganz, Dan Fenske, Tingting Schwartz**), as well as several retired MLC professors, currently teach an ALHS Online course. As MLC's director of academic computing and online learning, I am blessed to serve as superintendent for ALHS Online, overseeing its day-to-day operations.

ALHS Online is another way that MLC partners with Lutheran high schools to nurture students academically and also spiritually. When any student, from anywhere in the world, can enroll in a high-quality course taught from a Christian perspective—that is truly a blessing.

To learn more, go to [ALHSO.org](http://ALHSO.org) or contact me at [grunwajr@mlc-wels.edu](mailto:grunwajr@mlc-wels.edu).

