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Center Grove growing its online offerings, global campus

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First Posted: March 06, 2015 - 8:25 pm

Last Updated: March 06, 2015 - 8:25 pm

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Center Grove High School is getting closer to offering all of the courses students will need to graduate online.

The high school launched its online, global campus two years ago by offering nine online courses students could take during the summer. Since then, teachers have been creating new online classes each semester. Teachers are developing 13 additional online classes now, which would bring the total number of online courses to 44, coordinator of connected learning Kim Hendrick said.

The new courses include a mix of core classes, such as Algebra II, Chemistry I and English 10, and electives, such as music theory and meteorology. Eventually, Center Grove wants to be able to offer enough online courses so that students who need to take a specific course for the first time or who need to make up a course they failed can take them online, Hendrick said.

"We're really trying to maximize our courses to meet the best needs of our students," she said.

That also means adding employees who can help students and teachers still learning to use the new online courses, and having teachers create more online courses and resources for students.

"(Teachers) really want to develop these courses," Hendrick said. "Everyone has been excited to work with us. We haven't run up against any teachers who don't want to do this."

When creating an online course from a traditional class, teachers have to record audio and video of themselves teaching lessons students would normally hear in the classroom. They also make new assignments, which typically include more projects that students can work on in groups or individually, than they would have in their regular classroom, Hendrick said.

Even Center Grove teachers who aren't designing online courses now are creating and posting more videos, aids and other resources for their students online, Hendrick said.

"We have teachers that are naturally gravitating to that blended learning model, and they're seeing the value

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in that," Hendrick said.

Along with Hendrick, who replaced online coordinator Joanna Ray in November, Center Grove has hired global campus teacher Eric Nentrup to work primarily in the high school's media center and provide more immediate help to students who need it. Previously, Ray was tasked with simultaneously working with teachers who were developing the online classes and helping students learn to use them, and those tasks were too much for one person to handle, chief technology officer Jason Taylor said.

"Adding him was probably one of the best things we've done," Taylor said.

Other local school districts, including Clark-Pleasant and Franklin schools, have started creating their own online courses or opened alternative academies that allow some of their students to finish high school online. Center Grove has made developing and launching the virtual courses a priority. That's also partly why media center upgrades are a key part of renovations being made now at the high school.

Many Center Grove students who take online courses during the school day complete their work in the high school's media center. Right now most of the media center is open, exposed space, which isn't ideal for multiple groups of students working on individual or group projects, Taylor said.

The high school's new media center will include more spaces where students will be able to work on projects, and also will include space where they can get help if they have questions about using their school-issued iPads, Taylor said.

"It's going to have more of that feel you get if you walk into one of the school buildings at Indiana University," Taylor said.

Construction on the about \$10.3 million high school project should be done by 2016.

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