

IS NORTH STAR A GOOD FIT FOR YOU?

When deciding on whether to enroll in an online school or a traditional school, students and families should consider which format is the best fit for them. In order to thrive in an online learning environment, students should have certain traits and habits. The following are examples of the qualities that successful online students possess.

- 1. Ability to work independently and actively participate.** In order to be successful in an online program, students must be able to keep up with all their work without the benefit of constant reminders from their teachers. People who need regular reminders and immediate feedback in order to get things done may not do well in an online school environment. Additionally, students will need to take an active part in their learning by taking great notes, completing all portions of the assignments, and taking part in their weekly core class Live Lessons. The more online students participate in class, the more they absorb the material to get the most out of the experience.
- 2. Self-motivated and strong time-management skills.** Students who are successful in online programs are willing to advocate for themselves, are motivated and proactive. Students also need to be able to prioritize and track their own progress in their classes by utilizing the built-in planner (students can view by day, week, or month).
- 3. Ability to self-reflect.** In order to be successful, it's important for students to think about the feedback they receive and incorporate it into their work. Feedback is given by teachers within the Connexus system and given on short answer assessments, portfolios, and other assignments.
 - Reviewing work and reflecting on learning progress helps students to take ownership of their own learning.
- 4. Being a thorough and comprehensive reader.** Students will be learning a great deal of the Connexus content by "reading to learn". Being able to comprehend the material is very important to the success of the student.
 - Reading readiness can be determined by reviewing the students' most recent standardized assessment scores.
- 5. Commitment.** Some students mistakenly think they won't have to dedicate as much time to their studies as they would when attending a brick-and-mortar school. However, the reality is that students in online schools often invest more time into their studies than their on-campus counterparts.
- 6. Setting a daily schedule and knowing when to take breaks.** Most students work best with a schedule, but it needn't be the same one every day. Online students can spend long hours in front of their computer working on their schoolwork daily. In order to stay refreshed, it's important for them to create a daily schedule that allows them to take regular breaks away from the screen.
 - Having a set schedule is one of the ways that students can keep a sense of normalcy during this unprecedented time. Additionally, breaking up the day makes the workload feel more doable.

7. **Taking advantage of available supports.** We strongly encourage all students to utilize the following supports at North Star Online School: Content area whole group weekly live lessons, drop-in office hours via Zoom, Teams, or Live Lesson, one-to-one live lessons with content teachers for additional support (by appointment), use of embedded graphic organizers and note-takers, completion of all tasks within the curriculum (not all tasks will be graded), check-ins with school success coach and/or grade level advisor, and counseling support.

8. **Willingness to ask questions.** In an online environment, a teacher can't tell when a student is struggling in the same way they can in a brick-and-mortar classroom. Students need to be willing to ask questions as they arise and feel confident in doing so.
 - Can the student ask for help, contact the teacher, and describe the specific difficulty they are experiencing in order to receive the needed help and assistance?

9. **Family Support.** In traditional schools, teachers take students through their daily routines, support the learning, and monitor work completion. In an online school, this responsibility falls to the parent/guardian as "Learning Coach". It is the job of the Learning Coach to monitor and support students on a daily basis.
 - Estimated time commitment for Learning Coach:
 - Grades K-6, three to six hours daily
 - Grades 7-8, two to four hours daily
 - Grades 9-12, four to six hours weekly