



## DeKalb OnLine Academy Gives Access to AP & Credit Recovery Courses with Wimba

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*-Dr. Regina Merriwether*

*Assistant Director of Instructional Technology and Principal of DeKalb OnLine Academy*

Whether a student wants to get ahead or just get caught up, the DeKalb OnLine Academy (DOLA) of Georgia's DeKalb County School System can help. Offering a comprehensive online, instructor-led curriculum that includes core courses required for graduation, Advanced Placement courses, as well as elective courses, DOLA students benefit by taking its innovative online courses in order to:

- Enroll in courses not offered in their local schoolhouse
- Take acceleration courses
- Receive course recovery efforts
- Accommodate scheduling issues for students who need courses for graduation
- Earn Carnegie credits (.5 or 1 unit)

DOLA, DeKalb County School System's virtual school, is designed to enhance the educational experience for students by providing greater access to learning via online courses. Its mission is to provide virtual educational experiences that afford access to learning and achievement which are accessible anytime, anyplace, and at any pace,

which reflects the desires and needs of the community. And to ensure it achieves its lofty mission, DOLA relies on Wimba's highly collaborative software to spark its young students' minds.

"We wanted to have our online classes mirror our face-to-face classes, and Wimba gave us that opportunity," said Dr. Regina Merriwether, Assistant Director of Instructional Technology and Principal of DeKalb OnLine Academy, when asked why Wimba was chosen to add a collaborative component to its online courses.

Dr. Merriwether and her staff had offered online courses for several years in a text-only capacity, but realized in order to enable its students to take courses not offered at their schools or to offer credit recovery courses, it needed Wimba to add the collaborative elements to its online courses which allow younger students to thrive.

And now, from mathematics, health, and social studies, to accounting, Latin, and biology, students throughout the county-wide school system can take a rich online curriculum based on



DeKalb Online Academy  
DeKalb County, GA USA  
[www.dekalbonlineacademy.org](http://www.dekalbonlineacademy.org)

### WIMBA PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

- Wimba Classroom
- Wimba Voice

### KEY BENEFITS

Students can take AP courses, courses not available at a local school, and accommodate scheduling issues.

***Students at Dekalb OnLine Academy collaborate with teachers in real-time***





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## A RICH ONLINE CURRICULUM

35 teachers use Wimba on a daily basis and have already taught more than 2,000 students in classes ranging from Latin and Social Studies to Biology and Accounting.

## ABOUT WIMBA

Wimba develops web-based collaboration software designed for online education, language learning and live interactive communications. Our collaborative applications enable learning professionals to fully embrace the new wave of teaching and learning opportunities afforded by the Internet; regardless of geographic location, bandwidth or operating system. Our classroom collaboration solutions enable educators to conduct live, online classes, meetings, office hours and other collaborations, and our language learning tools add oral interaction directly into course content, web-pages, study groups and assessments. With simplicity and power, Wimba adds new dimensions to online, accessible education, enhancing the learning experience for both students and instructors.

highly interactive courses which allow DOLA's students to excel.

35 teachers use Wimba on a daily basis to reach their students. With the implementation of Wimba Classroom and Wimba Voice, both DOLA students and teachers can hold conversations, discussions, and ask and answer questions very similar to the way they do in a traditional classroom. DOLA teachers hold daily live synchronous chats while students use Wimba Classroom's electronic whiteboard daily for presentations of content and for group collaboration.

Students and teachers alike couldn't be more pleased.

"The teachers loved Wimba's products when we first introduced them, and they love Wimba now," Merriwether says.

Wimba's ease-of-use is also a big factor. According to Merriwether, Wimba is very easy to use, and this specifically led to a smooth adoption.

But it's the student responses which resonate the loudest. With Wimba, students can easily ask questions, talk to their teachers, work in cooperative groups, work on problems on the eBoard, view videos, and view and present PowerPoint

presentations, all from a distance.

2,000 students have already used Wimba Classroom or Wimba Voice, and DOLA believes they couldn't be any happier. "The students really like Wimba because it gives us the opportunity to offer courses that closely mirror face-to-face classes," she says, underscoring the point that interaction and collaboration are vital elements to creating a successful online course.

Before Wimba was implemented, students and parents often wondered, "Will my teacher be online with me?" but Wimba has appeased concerns that students will be left alone in cyberspace to fend – and learn – for themselves. Just as teachers in a traditional school setting stand at their doors waiting for the students to enter into the classroom, DOLA teachers "are sitting at their computers waiting for the students to login to their classrooms."

As DOLA strives to achieve its vision to create a virtual K-12 school that prepares students to be global learners in the digital age, it will work with Wimba every step of the way, thereby ensuring its students reach their potential to become contributing citizens and life-long learners.

