

The Online Learning Consortium Quality Scorecard for K12 Blended Learning

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Abstract

As K12 blended learning continues to expand, a K12-specific framework for evaluating program quality was not found. While rubrics such as Quality Matters and iNACOL address course-level design, no comprehensive scorecard exists for the broader design, leadership, implementation, and administration of K12 blended programs. This study used a four-round Delphi methodology to build expert consensus for adapting the Online Learning Consortium's 2023 Quality Scorecard for Blended Programs, originally developed for higher education, for use in K12 settings. A panel of 20 U.S.-based experts in K12 blended teaching, administration, and research evaluated 65 quality indicators across nine categories, voting on relevance, proposing new indicators, and refining language for a K12 audience using a 6-point Likert scale with consensus defined as $M \geq 5.0$ and 70% panel agreement. The resulting OLC K12 Blended Learning Scorecard organizes quality indicators into eight categories: School District Support, Technology Support, Course Development and Instructional Design, Course Structure, Teaching and Learning, Teacher Support, Student Support, and Evaluation and Assessment. Findings show quality blended learning in K12 settings depends on the combination of organizational leadership, infrastructure, instructional design, pedagogy, and ongoing evaluation, rather than an isolated intervention. This study contributes a practical, research-informed tool to guide K12 educators, administrators, and policymakers in designing, implementing, and evaluating blended learning programs, and offers a foundation for future research on scorecard implementation, blended teacher training, and blended learning program evaluation.

Keywords: Quality K12 education, K12 blended learning, K12 digital learning, quality blended learning, Delphi method, blended learning program evaluation

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K12 education continues to transform with the integration of emerging digital technologies along with the disruption created by the COVID-19 pandemic (Yu et al., 2025a). With that transformation, K12 blended learning continues to increase (Molnar, 2019; Short et al., 2021). While hybrid or blended learning was used prior by early adopters, the pandemic forced many to an online and blended educational environment, which quickly showed a gap in the understanding of best practices (Johnson et al. 2023; Henríquez & Hilliger, 2024; Newfield, 2025). As digital educators, we need to respond to this knowledge gap as well as the research on parental demand for school choice. For example, two different studies show that 60% of parents switched their child's(children's) school or are considering a change (Ed Choice, 2026; National School Choice Awareness Foundation, 2025). One recent survey revealed that 49% of parents would prefer their child learn from home at least one day a week. While 10% of those want full-time homeschooling, the remaining 39% of parents desire their child to learn at home one to four days a week, with the remaining days attending school on-campus. In another parent survey, 64% of parents indicated that if they were looking for a new school for their child, would enroll him or her in a hybrid school (McShane, 2024). The increased parent demand for school choice is not about rejecting education but about recognizing students have different needs, different schedules, and different learning styles; because of this, blended learning is even more important to the success of K12 education.

Background and Rationale

Horn and Staker (2011) were convinced early on that blended learning could revolutionize K–12 education by offering the following:

- A more consistent and personalized pedagogy that lets students learn at their own pace, use preferred learning modalities, and receive frequent and timely feedback on their performance for a far higher quality learning experience.
- Productive new school models that require fewer, more specialized teachers and use space more efficiently. (p. 6)

Just four years later, Horn and Staker (2015) found schools were indeed adopting blended learning because of personalizing student learning, increasing student access, and needing to control costs.

K12 blended learning is a formal education program in which a student learns at least in part both through online learning and face-to-face components (Horn & Staker, 2011). Key characteristics include the integration of online and offline learning environments, the use of technology to facilitate learning, and the empowerment of students to take ownership of their educational journey. This model supports differentiated instruction and can cater to diverse learning styles and needs, making it particularly effective in K12 settings where student engagement and adaptability are crucial.

Staker and Horn (2012) suggested four different models of blended learning: the Rotation, Flex, Self-Blend (now called À La Carte model), and Enriched Virtual models. In a Rotation model, students move between teacher-directed learning activities, including at least one online activity and is most used in elementary schools (McCabe & Francis, 2020). Their Flex model utilizes foundational online content that is individually customized, with students moving on a flexible schedule among the learning modalities but still includes a teacher on-site.

In the Self-Blend model, students supplement their on-campus experience by taking one or more courses entirely online. The Enriched Virtual model offers the majority of coursework to be completed at home but still requires students to visit the campus for face-to-face learning.

The literature continues to support blended learning effectiveness. For example, one meta-analysis of 84 studies showed significant positive effects on K12 student performance especially in cognitive domains (Li & Wang, 2022). Means et al. (2014) found, “on average, students in conditions that included significant amounts of learning online performed better than students receiving face-to-face instruction,” and went on to state that, “the subset of the studies employing blended learning approaches was entirely responsible for the observed online advantage” (p. 20). Another systematic literature review of 1355 studies found blended learning was more effective than both online learning and traditional learning (Topping et al., 2022). In their meta-analysis of 133 studies, Yu et al. (2025b) also found blended learning was more effective than online learning.

The literature has shown that while K12 blended learning continues to expand, the research has not kept the same pace (Barbour et al., 2026). While both Quality Matters (Kennedy et al., 2018) and iNACOL (Voelker et al., 2019) offer rubrics for use in K12 education, there was not a more recent rubric or best practices found that focused on the overall design, leadership, implementation, and administration of blended learning in K12 education (Barbour et al., 2014; Linton, 2016). In addition, Short et al. (2021) suggested additional research is needed for administrative, school-wide, and district-level practices of blended learning. While there have been several systematic and meta-analyses performed, clearly identified quality practices for K12 blended learning were not found, as existing research focuses on teaching, course design, effectiveness of student learning (Li & Wang, 2022; Poirier et al., 2019; Topping et al., 2022; Yu et al., 2025b), and student perceptions and satisfaction (Diep et al., 2017). Because the literature continues to reveal challenges—such as teacher training and continuous professional development, infrastructure gaps and inconsistent implementation quality (Angawi & Tasir, 2024)—a K12 blended learning quality scorecard may be a useful resource for both researchers and practitioners.

Purpose and Research Question

The purpose of this Delphi study was to determine if experts in K12 blended programs believe the existing quality indicators identified in the Online Learning Consortium’s Quality Scorecard for Blended Programs in 2023 were essential for K12 blended academic programs, if existing indicators need modification, and if additional indicators are necessary. For this study, K12 blended learning is “a formal education program in which a student learns at least in part through online learning, with some element of student control over time, place, path, and/or pace” (Horn & Staker, 2011, p. 5). Blended learning combines traditional face-to-face instruction with digital learning experiences, allowing for a more personalized and flexible approach to education. This study sought to investigate quality indicators within K12 blended learning environments and to contribute to the growing field in order to help policymakers and educators in the development and evaluation of blended learning programs.

The following research question guided this study:

What do experts in K12 blended programs believe if the existing quality indicators identified in the Online Learning Consortium's Quality Scorecard for Blended Programs in 2023 are essential for K12 blended academic programs, if existing quality indicators need modification, and if additional quality indicators are necessary to create a K12 Blended Program Quality Scorecard?

Research Design and Methodology

In order to establish consensus, a Delphi method was used to develop consensus on the modification of the Online Learning Consortium's (OLC) 2023 Quality Scorecard for Blended Programs (Higher Education) for use as a scorecard for K12 blended/hybrid academic programs. First used by the Rand Corporation in the 1950s for forecasting (Dalkey & Helmer, 1963), Delphi methodology is an iterative, anonymous process using multiple surveys with an expert panel and is best used when consensus is needed from experts for complex or uncertain topics (Jorm, 2025).

The Delphi method is best suited for this study because its structural features are specifically designed to counteract biases that may compromise other group decision-making approaches such as Nominal Group Technique. Expert consensus achieved through the Delphi process is considered more reliable and objective than the opinion of a single expert because it maximizes the benefits of engaging a group of knowledgeable individuals (Khodyakov, 2023). This reliability stems largely from the anonymity of the expert panel members in order to discourage member dominance, group conformity, or "groupthink," commonly observed in face-to-face group meetings (Nasa et al., 2021). Finally, the iterative, feedback-driven structure of the method allows expert opinion to converge in a controlled, evidence-informed way rather than through social pressure. Controlled feedback meaningfully shapes how panelists revise their judgments between rounds, and this reassessment often results in a convergence of opinions across multiple rounds (Barrios et al., 2021), giving researchers a transparent, traceable record of how and why consensus was reached.

Consensus Level

Across systematic reviews of Delphi studies, consensus is largely defined as percentage agreement in published Delphi studies with cut-off values most commonly set at 70%, 75%, or 80% (Schifano & Niederberger, 2025). For this study, consensus level was established as a M=5 points and above with 70% of the expert panel being in agreement using a 6-point Likert scale:

1 point=Absolutely Not Essential

2 points=Not Essential

3 points=Slightly Not Essential

4 points=Slightly Essential

5 points=Essential

6 points=Absolutely Essential.

For example, if the panel agreed an indicator reaches the minimum level of consensus (M=5.0 or above using a Likert scale of 1-6 and 70% panel agreement), the quality indicator

was removed from the next survey round and recorded as gaining consensus to be part of the new OLC K12 Blended Learning Scorecard. If consensus level was not reached after survey two rounds, the quality indicator was removed from consideration.

Delphi Expert Panel

The composition of a Delphi expert panel is critical as the quality of consensus reached depends entirely on the expertise and engagement of the participants. The panel's depth of knowledge and practical experience with the subject matter, along with their willingness to remain engaged through multiple rounds of data collection, directly influence the validity and reliability of study findings (Belton et al., 2019; Jorm, 2025; Niederberger & Spranger, 2020; Schmalz et al., 2020). The quality of Delphi panel results depends on the expertise of invited panelists and their willingness and ability to articulate their perspectives using the Delphi approach (Khodyakov et al., 2023).

Content validity may be strengthened by careful selection of the expert panel so that its composition is as representative as possible (Hasson et al., 2000). Selecting participants who combined recognized expertise with a collaborative disposition therefore helped ensure both the rigor of the input gathered and the completion rate needed to sustain a credible consensus-building process across all rounds. High attrition between rounds is a well-documented threat to Delphi studies and attrition across rounds is commonplace in Delphi research (Haynes & Shelton, 2018). For this reason, selection criteria for this panel prioritized two qualities: demonstrated expertise with the topic under investigation, and a genuine interest in collaborating with fellow panelists toward a shared outcome (Shelton & Creghan, 2015).

Purposeful sampling was used with the Online Learning Consortium assisting the researcher in identifying qualified experts throughout the US that work in K12 blended learning or scholarly researchers with peer-reviewed publications in K12 blended learning and who were willing to be part of the Delphi study. Forty-eight experts were identified and invited to join the study. The Delphi expert panel consisted of 20 US experts in K12 blended teaching and learning with five or more years of experience; thirteen members of the expert panel had more than 10 years of experience in K12 blended learning with only one member have the minimum of 5 years. Of the 20, 18 members completed the first survey round. Panel members must have completed the prior survey round in order provide data for the subsequent survey round.

Description of Delphi Rounds

For this study, four survey rounds were used to complete the study. At the beginning of each survey round, the researcher communicated clarifying information on what data was being presented and what votes were needed from the expert panel. A summary of results was presented before each survey round to assist with decision making.

Survey Round One

Using Survey Monkey for online data collection, the first survey provided the expert panelists the OLC 2023 Blended Quality Scorecard statements of quality to be voted on by each expert panel member for relevance and application to K12 education. Sixty-five blended learning quality indicators in nine categories (Institutional Support, Technology Support, Course Development/Instructional Design, Course Structure, Teaching and Learning, Learner Support, and Evaluation and Assessment) were presented (Appendix A, Table 1). In addition, for each quality indicator, panel members were given the opportunity to suggest edits to the indicator phrasing and to recommend additional quality indicators to be voted on by the expert

panel in the next survey round. The survey concluded with asking the expert panel how many years of experience they have in K12 Blended Learning.

Survey Round Two

The second round survey presented the indicators (8) for panel voting that did not achieve consensus and 23 suggestions for new quality indicators in each of the eight categories (Appendix A, Table 2). For the eight indicators still needing consensus, the Mean (M) and Standard Deviation (SD) were provided to the panel to show overall percentage of agreement.

Next, the panelists were asked if there were any additional quality indicators that needed to be included for voting. Finally, the following three survey questions explored responses as suggested by the panel in Survey Round One:

- Are more specific statements needed for blended learning since many of the indicators could also apply to online learning?
- Should Hyflex mode be considered?
- Should a quality indicator be developed that points to the skills (i.e., navigating online tools, navigating multimodal assets like videos, prompt engineering, personal motivation, asynchronous communication, video conferencing) one learns by completing an online/blended/hyflex course for it to add to the student's skillset in a different way than in a face-to-face class?

Panelists provided their opinion on each of the questions included in the data results.

Survey Round Three

The third round survey presented 40 quality indicators that had reached consensus but had suggested edits and rephrasing. In addition, the panel was asked to review 16 quality indicators for consensus suggested in Survey Round One. Three additional quality indicators were suggested by panel in Survey Round Two and needed voting for consensus (Appendix A, Table 3).

The following three survey questions explored responses as suggested by the panel in Survey Round Two:

- Should the word "course" be replaced with the word "class" throughout the scorecard?
- Should the Faculty Support category be changed to Teacher Support Category?
- Should the following Institutional Support quality indicator be deleted as it appears to be duplicated in Course Development category: *Blended courses/programs are systematically reviewed based on published quality standards and continuously improved to optimize the learning experience and ensure achievement of learning outcomes?*

Survey Round Four

The final round survey presented three questions regarding overall phrasing for the quality indicators and four indicators needing a final vote in phrasing. The three clarifying questions addressed the following suggested changes that would affect all quality indicators since the scorecard is for K12 users:

- Should the word “learner” be replaced with the word “student”?
- Should the word “institution” be replaced with the word(s) “school (or district)?
- Should the words “instructor or faculty” be replaced with “teacher or teachers”?

Panelists were encouraged to examine the provided cumulative results from the previous three survey rounds for decision making.

Results

Survey Round One

The first round survey resulted in only 57 of the 65 quality indicators presented reaching consensus. Eight quality indicators did not reach consensus and were returned for a re-vote; four indicators in Course Development/Instructional Design, three in Learner Support and one in Evaluation and Assessment achieved less than the required level of consensus ($M=5.00$). In addition, panelists suggested an additional 23 quality indicators to be considered in Survey Round Two. The panel also suggested edits for 40 quality indicators. Finally, three suggestions were made that required panel responses to be answered in Survey Round Two:

- Are more specific statements needed for blended learning since many of the indicators could also apply to online learning?
- Should Hyflex mode be considered?
- Should a quality indicator be developed that points to the skills (i.e., navigating online tools, navigating multimodal assets like videos, prompt engineering, personal motivation, asynchronous communication, video conferencing) one learns by completing an online/blended/hyflex course for it to add to the student’s skillset in a different way than in a face-to-face class?

Survey Round Two

Of the eight indicators presented again for voting on consensus, three achieved consensus. The remaining five indicators were removed from panel consideration because of low stability of responses. Of the 23 new suggestions for quality indicators, 17 did not achieve consensus in Round Two but were presented again to the panelist’ voting in Survey Round Three. The six indicators achieving consensus were in the following categories: Institutional Support, Technology Support, Teaching and Learning, Faculty Support, and Learner Support.

Of the 40 quality indicators with suggested edits and rephrasing, 12 achieved response consensus and were removed from the next survey and included in the final OLC K12 Quality Scorecard. An additional nine indicators achieved response consensus but also received additional suggested edits so those indicators were returned to the panel for voting in Survey Round Three. The remaining 19 quality indicators were returned with the most popular responses to be voted on again for panel agreement.

The expert panel was asked if there were any additional quality indicators that needed to be included for voting; they provided three (Appendix A, Table 3). Finally, the following questions were asked in Survey Round One that needed expert panel response. Results are provided with the question.

- Are more specific statements needed for blended learning since many of the indicators could also apply to online learning?

While three panel members' responses agreed, the other six responses believed it was not necessary since the modalities are similar and "good teaching and learning design" should be the primary focus no matter what the modality.

- Should Hyflex mode be considered?

Two panel members' responses agreed and six did not believe Hyflex mode should be used for Blended Learning terminology. Some suggested Hyflex is a term more for higher education.

- Should a quality indicator be developed that points to the skills (i.e., navigating online tools, navigating multimodal assets like videos, prompt engineering, personal motivation, asynchronous communication, video conferencing) one learns by completing an online/blended/Hyflex course for it to add to the student's skill set in a different way than in a face-to-face class?

Five panel members' responses agreed it was a good recommendation but it should not be included in this scorecard. One response was undecided.

Survey Round Three

The third round survey presented 40 indicators with suggested edits and rephrasing. In addition, 16 suggested indicators were voted on for consensus; four indicators reached consensus. The remaining 12 indicators were not returned for a re-vote and were not included in the scorecard.

The following three survey questions explored responses as suggested by the panel in Survey Round Two:

- Should the word "course" be replaced with the word "class" throughout the scorecard?

The majority of the expert panel did not agree (53.85%) the word "class" should replace the word "course."

- Should the Faculty Support category be changed to Teacher Support Category?

The expert panel agreed (84.62%) the "Faculty Support" category should be changed to "Teacher Support" category.

- Should the following Institutional Support quality indicator be deleted as it appears to be duplicated in the Course Development category: *Blended courses/programs are systematically reviewed based on published quality standards and continuously improved to optimize the learning experience and ensure achievement of learning outcomes?*

The expert panel agreed (71.43%) the quality indicator was duplicated and should be deleted.

Survey Round Four

The final round survey presented three questions regarding overall phrasing for the quality indicators and four indicators needing a final vote in phrasing. The three clarifying

questions addressed the following suggested changes that would affect all quality indicators since the scorecard is for K12 users:

- Should the word “learner” be replaced with the word “student”?

The majority of the expert panel agreed (76.93%) “student” should replace “learner” where applicable throughout the scorecard.

- Should the word “institution” be replaced with the word(s) “school (or district)”?

The majority of the expert panel agreed (69.23%) “school (or district)” should replace “institution” where applicable throughout the scorecard.

- Should the words “instructor or faculty” be replaced with “teacher or teachers”?

The majority of the expert panel agreed (61.54%) “teacher or teachers” should replace “instructor or faculty” where applicable throughout the scorecard.

Consensus was achieved for all four quality indicator edits and rephrasing. The final study results are provided in Appendix A, Table 4.

Discussion

This section presents findings organized across the eight categories of quality indicators that center on quality K12 blended learning: School District Support, Technology Support, Course Development and Instructional Design, Course Structure, Teaching and Learning, Teacher Support, Student Support, and Evaluation and Assessment. Each category synthesizes relevant literature to establish quality indicators grounded in empirical research. As a whole, these quality indicators show successful blended learning implementation requires a focus on quality for organizational, pedagogical, student support, and evaluation practices.

School District Support

The School District Support category demonstrates the important role of leadership, policy, and provision of resources, including providing adapted physical space and time for teachers to plan blended learning activities. Leadership must ensure the blended learning initiative aligns with the school district mission and vision. Effective blended learning programs must be grounded in a clearly articulated vision shared with all stakeholders, including parents, students, and staff. Without this buy-in and alignment, schools may struggle if the blended learning program does not reflect organizational goals.

The literature indicates engaged leadership and administrative support are foundational for quality K12 blended learning (Baca et al., 2019; Kömür, 2023; Newfield, 2025; Reardon, 2010); without it, teachers struggle to succeed in or even embrace blended learning. In fact, Hanney et al. (2023) found teachers need principals and districts to not only provide technology and resources but to be advocates for their success. Moreover, Henríquez and Hilliger (2024) urged key stakeholders such as leaders, teachers, and parents should be involved in the implementation of blended learning for both teacher and student success. In addition, they recommend leadership should define roles, responsibility, and accountability.

Successful blended learning requires adequate resources such as personnel, budget, professional development for teachers, and modified physical classroom space. The quality indicator focused on physical space was a new result; however, the literature does support it. In

fact, Sarmento et al. (2018) provide clear guidelines for how classrooms should be designed: space for community and collaboration, space to create assignments, space for teacher and student engagement and all with good technology support and comfortable seating. In addition, Pierce (2015) recommends similar guidelines and includes reconfigurable furniture and wireless Internet to assist with student collaboration.

Technology Support

The Technology Support category provides standards on the technology systems that impact blended learning and recommends benchmarking the technology infrastructure (i.e., the learning management system (LMS), data security, and support for teachers and staff and students). In fact, researchers assert the technology supporting blended learning initiatives must be prioritized as mission critical and should be carefully evaluated because technology failure can often be a barrier for teacher adoption (Al-Busaidi, 2012; Hanney et al., 2023; Min & Yu, 2023; Newfield, 2025). Along with this prioritization should be a focus on supporting pedagogy that supports learning and student engagement (COSN, 2025). In many instances, K12 technology departments must focus on the infrastructure but not necessarily those tools that truly impact teaching and learning outside the traditional classroom. Johnson et al. (2023) recommends technology infrastructure should be examined for both teachers and students with school districts being prepared to help students at home with technology needs and Internet access. As George (2025) points out, “educational technology's value lies not in devices, platforms, or digital content themselves but in how these tools serve pedagogical goals and promote equitable learning opportunities” (p. 59).

Data privacy and security is a continued concern for administrators supporting K12 blended learning with increased cyberattacks. Chanenson et al.'s (2023) study with IT personnel revealed technology administrators believe they do not have the necessary resources to address the ongoing battle with data breaches. If data security is addressed with an invasive technology that records student activity, then privacy can be a concern (Darling-Aduana, 2026). At the same time, digital equity must also be examined beyond just providing the technology tools; resources and training are needed to support equitable student experiences (Darling-Aduana, 2026).

Course Development and Instructional Design

The Course Development and Instructional Design category provides an overview of a systematic process for developing materials for blended courses, pointing to clear course objectives and student outcome alignment and the use of online course standards such as OLC's *Course Review Scorecard*, *Quality Matters*, or the *National Standards for Quality Online Teaching*. This includes best practices identified in the literature such as standards-based instructional design guided by learning objectives and student outcomes (Garrison & Vaughn, 2008; Quiroz et al., 2016; Shand & Glassett Farrelly, 2016) with teachers using intentional design for student interaction and collaboration (McCabe, & Francis, 2020).

Additional research supports evidence-based pedagogy and course design (Johnson et al., 2023) and design models such as ADDIE and ASSURE (Valverde-Berrocoso & Fernández-Sánchez, 2020) for creating age-appropriate blended course materials that should be reviewed for learning outcome achievement and relevance through a quality control process (Huett et al., 2011; Huett & Huett, 2012). Specific to blended course design should be requirements for ensuring best practices for inclusion and providing accessible and universally designed course materials (Basham et al., 2016; McCabe & Francis, 2020).

Course Structure

The Course Structure category reiterates that a systematic course development process supports creating quality blended course materials. Basic tenets such as providing identified learning goals, clear information for both parents and students on the schedule and assessment activities, as well as expectations for behavior and engagement, are included and were identified in the research literature early on. These tenets align with the National Standards for Online Course Quality, first released by the North American Council for Online Learning in 2007 and refined by iNACOL in 2011 (building on the Southern Regional Education Board's earlier Quality Online Course Standards). Adelstein and Barbours (2016) content validity study confirmed the elements such as course content clarity, instructional design, assessment practices, and course management/communication are grounded in the broader K-12 online and blended learning research literature.

Creating a successful learning community has long been recognized as a foundational best practice for supporting student success in online learning environments (Palloff & Pratt, 1999, 2005; Vaughn et al., 2013; Villanueva, 2021). Based on Garrison et al.'s (2000) Community of Inquiry framework, a successful blended learning community can influence effective learning occurs through social presence, cognitive presence, and teaching presence. Although originally developed for online courses in higher education, recent research shows the framework is equally applicable to K12 blended teaching and learning to support student success (Harrell & Wendt, 2019; Villanueva et al., 2024).

Teaching and Learning

The Teaching and Learning category, while only five indicators, summarizes the most effective tips for teaching in a blended environment. The literature shows best practices include a focus on student engagement (Wang & Hofkens, 2019; Wang et al., 2017), teacher presence and interaction (Graham, 2013; Liao et al., 2023; Stevens & Rice, 2016) and managing a seamless experience with both online and blended modalities (Kömür et al., 2023; Cheng et al., 2023; Short et al., 2021). In their study on online and blended teaching competencies, Pulham and Graham noted (2018) teachers need assistance with pacing, curriculum, and scheduling. Anthony (2019) suggests teachers should be more flexible and responsive to better engage students. Moreover, Archambault and Kennedy (2018) found teachers must be able to engage students with limited face-to-face contact while still making sure students master content.

Teacher Support

The Teacher Support category provides best practices for preparing and supporting teachers navigating the blended learning classroom. Training and assistance for technology assistance (An et al., 2021; Bergdahl & Bond, 2022), course development (Huett, 2018), and classroom management and online pedagogy (An et al., 2021; Jackson et al., 2021) are highly recommended throughout the literature as necessary for quality teacher preparation and ongoing support. For example, based on their study of blended learning student satisfaction, Tovine et al. (2019) recommended ongoing effective professional development is needed for instructors teaching blended learning courses, especially those that are new to the process. Johnson et al. (2023) asserted effective professional development must ongoing, include opportunities for practice, feedback, and reflection, effectively model blended pedagogies, and address both technological skills and pedagogical integration.

While Jackson et al. (2021) and Drexler (2018) called for training to focus personalizing learning, others, based on their research, assert overall training for the blended environment is

crucial to student success (Baca et al., 2019; Dawson & Dana, 2018; Hathaway & Mehdi, 2020; Huett, 2018; Lockee et al., 2020; Moore et al., 2017; Newman, 2025; Short et al., 2021; Sustanto, & Atabik; 2025; Tao, 2024). In addition, blended learning teachers need administrative support (Baca et al., 2019; Newman, 2025) and expectations provided for communication and feedback as well as support for working with all students (including disabled and underserved groups). Whiteside et al. (2019) recommends districts provide micro-communities to support continuous dialog on blended teaching, while Henríquez and Hilliger (2024) urge leadership to provide a fostering and supportive environment and suggest peer mentoring and hands-on activities to best prepare blended teachers, as was noted by Moore et al. (2017). Fox (2024) also found school leaders play an important role by creating open communication and opportunities for collaboration, which are necessary for teacher trust.

Student Support

The Student Support category gathers indicators that focus on providing clear communication to students and families before they enter the program and during their coursework. In addition, various support services are recommended such as technical support, tutorials, AI literacy, access to library and research resources, and assurances students with disabilities have equal access, which are all supported by literature. For example, as a result of their student satisfaction with blended learning study, Tovine et al. (2019) and Siko et al. (2026) suggest schools should develop or revise processes so students can experience onboarding to the blended learning environment; Siko et al. (2026) also point out readiness instruments need improvement for predicting students who may struggle and need intervention.

Henríquez and Hilliger (2024) recommend students need support to improve and use digital skills safely in the blended environment, while Siko et al. (2026) urge district policy to protect class scheduling and provide information dashboards for parents. Azukas et al.'s (2026) recent research on student support services such as tutoring, academic coaching, counseling services, librarianship, and digitally mediated co-curricular opportunities suggests found emerging evidence that these auxiliary supports contribute to student engagement, persistence, and well-being, despite a relatively limited research base.

Evaluation and Assessment

The Evaluation and Assessment category outlines processes and data analysis needed to improve K12 blended learning programs. Programs should be reviewed regularly with standards such as state guidelines or industry standards such as the OLC K12 Blended Learning Scorecard. In addition, data is needed on achievement of learning outcomes, course material reviews for effectiveness and accessibility, and student and parent satisfaction with support services. Smith and Stahl (2016) urge the review of course materials for WCAG and ADA compliance and UDL guidance. In addition, the process for assessing stakeholder satisfaction (student, teacher, staff, and school or district) with blended learning programs is well supported in the literature (Henríquez & Hilliger, 2024). Although the literature most commonly shows evaluation has been typically focused on course content (Barbour et al., 2016), and state standards vary widely (Barbour et al., 2014), a more holistic approach is needed to determine quality and effectiveness.

Future Research

The purpose of this Delphi study was the development of a quality scorecard as a guide for the development and administration of K12 blended learning programs. The Online Learning

Consortium's Blended Learning Scorecard, developed for higher education, was the foundation but was ultimately modified for this K12 research. Further research should be done with the implementation and evaluation of a blended learning program against the scorecard quality standards. In addition, it is recommended the K12 Blended Learning Scorecard be implemented into teacher preparation programs as an overview of blended teaching and course design. Additionally, more research is needed in specific strategies for personalized learning in the K12 blended classroom. Finally, as recommended by Halverson et al. (2023), additional research on the efficacy of blended learning is needed to inform leaders, faculty and policymakers.

Conclusion

The future of K12 blended learning will be shaped by data-driven improvement and emerging trends in educational technology. As schools collect and analyze data on student engagement and outcomes, they can refine instructional strategies and personalize learning experiences. Trends such as adaptive learning, artificial intelligence, and competency-based education offer new opportunities for enhancing blended learning quality and digital equity for students. Because of this, data-driven decision making, ongoing feedback from all stakeholders, and continuous professional development will remain indispensable to improve the quality of K12 blended programs.

The OLC K12 Blended Learning Scorecard offers a quality framework and essential guidance for educators and administrators to scale blended learning models and maintain excellence. There should be thoughtful integration of all of the quality indicators in order to meet students where they are in the 21st century. We, as a society, are asking students to prepare for a world where they will need to fluidly collaborate both in-person and virtually, where they'll need to be self-directed learners, and where they'll need to navigate digital environments with confidence and discernment. This research offers a thorough, evidence-based, resource to design and implement blended learning that can serve K12 education. The OLC K12 Blended Learning Scorecard can be downloaded here:

<https://onlinelearningconsortium.org/quality/scorecards/program-level/>.

Declarations

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Ethics Statement

This study was conducted in accordance with recognized ethical standards. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, and data were collected and reported with respect for confidentiality and anonymity. The study (all four surveys) was reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board of Lamar University, Approval No IRB-FY25-197.

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AI Use Statement

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Appendix

Table 1

Round One Survey - Quality Indicators Presented to Expert Panel for Consensus

OLC 2025 Blended Learning Scorecard (for Higher Education)	
Institution/Administration Support Quality Standards	
1.	The institution has a governance structure to enable systematic and continuous improvement of blended learning courses/programs.
2.	The institution has a governance structure to enable clear, timely, and effective decision making related to blended learning courses/programs.
3.	Blended learning courses/programs are reviewed for continuing relevance and compliance with accreditation standards and improved and updated accordingly.
4.	The institution has defined the strategic value of blended learning to its stakeholders (learners, faculty, parents, administration, staff, etc.).
5.	The organizational structure of the blended learning program supports the institution's mission, values, and strategic plan.
6.	The institution has a process for assessing needs and allocating resources to support effective administration of blended learning courses/programs.
7.	The institution allocates sufficient technical, financial and learner support resources to effectively administer blended courses/programs.
8.	The institution has policy and guidelines that confirm a learner who registers in a blended course or blended learning program is the same learner who participates in and completes the course or program and receives academic credit. This is done by verifying the identity of a learner by using methods such as (a) a secure login and pass code, (b) proctored examinations, or (c) other technologies and practices that are effective in verifying learner identification.
9.	The institution provides resources and assistance to faculty to secure permissions for all course materials (Creative Commons, Copyright, Fair Use, Public Domain, etc.).
Technology Support Quality Standards	
1.	The course delivery technology is considered a mission critical enterprise system and supported as such.
2.	Whether the institution maintains local data centers (servers), and/or contracts for outsourced, hosted services or cloud services, those systems are administered in compliance with established data management practices such as the Information Technology Service Management (ITSM) standards, which include appropriate power protection, backup solutions, disaster recovery plans, etc.
3.	The technology systems related to the delivery of blended learning courses/programs are highly reliable and operable.
4.	A documented technology plan that includes electronic security measures (e.g., password protection, encryption, secure online or proctored exams if applicable) is in place and operationalized.
5.	The institution has a well-supported infrastructure (e.g., Learning Management System; multimedia development tools) for creating and maintaining blended education courses/programs.

6. Faculty, staff, and learners are supported in the development and use of new technologies and skills applicable to blended learning.

Course Development and Instructional Design Quality Standards

1. Blended courses/programs are designed with alignment between learning objectives, course materials, learning activities and assessments to ensure that learners achieve measurable learning outcomes.
2. Quality standards to guide course design, development, delivery and evaluation of blended instruction are published and followed.
3. A course development process has been established and utilized to ensure that courses are utilizing consistent course elements (navigation, technology, etc.) across all of the courses in the program.
4. Blended courses are designed to incorporate face-to-face and online experiences in complementary ways to optimize engagement and achievement of learning outcomes.
5. Blended courses/programs are systematically reviewed based on published quality standards and continuously improved to optimize the learning experience and ensure achievement of learning outcomes.
6. Blended courses/programs are designed to support diversity, equity, and inclusion within the learning environment.
7. Learner-centered instruction (i.e., engagement, immersion and personal responsibility) is considered during the course design and development process.
8. Blended course design promotes interaction and engagement among faculty and learners.
9. Course workloads are reviewed to ensure it is appropriate for designated credit allocation.
10. A systematic process is established and followed for evaluating the effectiveness of current and emerging technologies to support the achievement of learning outcomes and delivering course content.
11. Course technology is used intentionally to support achievement of learning outcomes and unnecessary use of technology is minimized.
12. Blended courses are American Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant and adhere to Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAGs).
13. Faculty play a central role in blended course/program design and development.

Course Structure Quality Standards

1. The blended course includes a syllabus outlining course objectives, learning outcomes, evaluation methods, books and supplies, technical and proctoring requirements, and other related course information, making course requirements and course schedule transparent.
2. All learners enrolled in a blended course, regardless of location, have access to the library/learning resources needed to be successful.
3. Expectations for assignments, participation, grade policy and faculty communication and feedback are clearly described in the course syllabus.
4. Links to technical, learner services and disability support resources are easily accessible in the course.
5. Rules or standards for appropriate learner behavior, both online and face-to-face, are provided within the course or syllabus.

6. Instructional materials are easily accessible to the learner, easy to use, with an ability to be accessed by multiple operating systems, applications and devices such as tablets.
7. The blended course utilizes strategies to support inclusion and sense of belonging for learners.
8. The course structure is clear, intuitive and easy to navigate.

Teaching and Learning Quality Standards

1. Learner-to-Learner and Faculty-to-Learner interaction are essential characteristics and are encouraged and facilitated in either face-to-face or online portions of a course.
2. Instructor feedback on learner assignments and questions is constructive and provided in a timely manner.
3. Instructors use evidence-based practices to create an engaged, learning-focused presence across all modalities of the course.
4. Faculty teach the course as one cohesive whole, using specific strategies to create an engaged, learning-focused presence in both modalities of the course.

Faculty Support Quality Standards

1. Technical assistance is provided for faculty before and during blended course development and teaching.
2. Faculty have access to training, assistance and support for course development and effective teaching with technology in a variety of modalities.
3. Faculty receive guidance for assessing Fair Use and identifying and responding to plagiarism.
4. Faculty are provided on-going professional development related to blended teaching and learning.
5. Expectations for faculty engagement (e.g., response time, contact information, etc.) are established and adhered to.
6. Faculty are provided administrative and technological support for ensuring that course materials are ADA compliant.
7. Faculty are provided information and resources on accessibility standards for blended learning.
8. Faculty support and resources are provided to promote application of blended teaching and learning best practices.

Learner Support Quality Standards

1. Before starting a blended learning program, learners are advised about the minimum technology skills, equipment and software needed to participate successfully in the program.
2. Students can access program information, including admission requirements, tuition and fees, books and supplies, technical and proctoring requirements, and student support services.
3. Throughout the duration of the course/program, learners have access to training and information they will need to secure required materials through electronic databases, interlibrary loans, government archives, news services, and other sources (such as OER).
4. Learners have access to appropriate technical assistance and technical support staff.

1. Support personnel are available with extended hours to address learner questions and problems of a technical nature.
2. Learners are provided with information regarding required course materials in print and/or digital format, such as ISBN numbers for textbooks, publisher content, and delivery modes prior to course enrollment.
3. The institution provides guidance/tutorials for learners in the use of all forms of technologies used for course delivery.

Evaluation and Assessment Quality Standards

1. The program is systematically assessed using specific established standards (i.e., accreditor guidelines and/or other recognized agency such as the OLC Scorecard.)
2. A variety of data (academic and administrative information) are used to regularly evaluate program effectiveness in order to facilitate continuous improvement.
3. Intended learning outcomes at the course and program level are reviewed regularly to ensure alignment, clarity, utility, appropriateness, and effectiveness.
4. A process is in place and followed for the comprehensive assessment of support services for faculty and learners.
5. A systematic process is in place and followed for the assessment of learner retention in blended courses and programs.
6. Program demonstrates compliance with accessibility standards.
7. Course evaluations collect learner feedback on the effectiveness of the instructor and the educational experience.
8. Blended courses are held to the same standards as any modality of face-to-face or online courses.
9. Blended courses/programs are evaluated and continuously improved to support diversity, equity and inclusion within the learning environment.
10. A process is in place and followed for the assessment of learners, faculty, staff, and institutional satisfaction with the blended learning program(s).

Table 2

Round One Survey Results – New Suggested Quality Indicators

Category	Suggestion for New Quality Indicator
Institutional Support	Physical learning spaces designed for hybrid classrooms and common spaces are equipped to support both independent and collaborative work aligned with blended practices.
	Teachers are provided with protected time to collaboratively plan cohesive lessons that span in-person and online instruction.
Technology Support	Teachers and administrators can easily track student progress, attendance, and participation across both modalities. The school ensures that every student has consistent access to appropriate devices and internet at school and home.

Course Development and Instructional Design	The program includes checks to prevent cognitive overload and ensures that workload is balanced and manageable for each age group. Curriculum in both the online and in-person components is tightly aligned to state academic standards and learning progressions. The program embeds Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) competencies (e.g., self-regulation, empathy, relationship skills) within both face-to-face and online environments.
Course Structure	Clearly defined norms for attendance, participation, and behavior in both settings are communicated.
Teaching and Learning Support	Learning is seamless and interconnected across modalities, not fragmented or duplicative. Instruction is intentionally adapted to leverage the strengths of each modality (e.g., project- based learning in person, personalized practice online).
Faculty Support	Professional learning is not one-time but embedded and responsive to teacher needs and emerging technology. Teachers receive ongoing training on best practices in blended instruction, including classroom management in hybrid contexts, formative assessment, and learner engagement.
Learner Support	Regular communication occurs with families to explain the blended learning approach and address any concerns. Guidance is provided on how to support learners in safe use of technology (digital citizenship), including the use of GenAI. Students receive instruction tailored to their grade level on safe, ethical, and responsible use of technology in digital learning environments. Structures are in place for frequent, two-way communication between teachers/schools and families using accessible tools (email, apps, phone calls, etc.). Comprehensive, scaffolded orientations are provided for both students and caregivers that introduce learning platforms, expectations, schedules, and support services. The program builds student metacognition and organizational skills to foster independence and responsibility in a hybrid (blended) setting. Blended programs include built-in supports for learners like translation tools for non-English learners and captioning, screen readers, and individualized accommodations for students with disabilities.

Evaluation and Assessment Category	Changes made to the program/course and their impact to inform future improvements are documented.
	Ongoing feedback loops from stakeholders systems are in place for students, parents, and teachers to provide input on blended program effectiveness and make iterative improvements.
	The program routinely reviews learning materials to ensure they are accessible (ADA compliant) and culturally responsive for all learners.
	Real-Time data dashboards for academic and engagement are monitored for continuous improvement.

Table 3*Round Two—Additional Suggested Indicators in Round Two*

Additional Suggested Indicators	
Institutional Support	All stakeholders understand how to access supports, both online and in person.
Course Development/Instructional Design	Instructional designers work with teachers in class module development.
Faculty Support	Teachers have training/certification in online teaching and learning methods.

Table 4*Final Results by Category*

OLC K12 Blended Learning Scorecard Final Results	
School District Support	
IS1	The school (or district) has a structured process to guide, support, and evaluate the effectiveness of blended learning courses/programs.
IS2	The school (or district) has a structured process in place to ensure clear, timely, and effective decision-making related to blended learning courses/programs.
IS4	The school (or district) has defined and articulated the value of blended learning with its stakeholders (students, teachers, parents, administration, staff, etc.).
IS5	The organizational structure of the blended learning program supports the school's (or district's) mission, values, and strategic plan.
IS6	The school (or district) has a process for assessing needs and allocating resources to support effective administration of blended learning courses/programs.
IS7	The school (or district) allocates sufficient technical, financial and student support resources to effectively administer blended courses/programs.

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- IS8 The school (or district) has policy and guidelines that confirm a student who is enrolled in a blended course or blended learning program is the same student who participates in and completes the course or program and receives academic credit.
 - IS9 The school or district ensures that all instructional materials used in blended learning courses comply with copyright, Creative Commons, public domain, and fair use guidelines. Support is provided to curriculum developers and instructional staff to secure appropriate permissions.
 - IS-A Physical learning spaces designed for blended classrooms and common spaces are equipped to support both independent and collaborative work aligned with blended practices.
 - IS-B Teachers are provided with protected time to collaboratively plan cohesive lessons that span in-person and online instruction.

Technology Support

- TS1 The learning management system and/or virtual classroom technologies used for blended learning are considered to be critical system(s) and supported as such.
- TS2 Whether the school (or district) maintains local data centers (servers) and/or contracts for outsourced, hosted services or cloud services, those systems are administered in compliance with established data management practices such as the Information Technology Service Management (ITSM) standards.
- TS3 The technology systems related to the delivery of blended learning courses/programs are highly reliable and operable.
- TS4 The school (or district) maintains a technology and security plan that includes age-appropriate electronic safety measures, such as secure login systems, encryption, and compliant with FERPA (and if relevant, laws such as COPPA, CIPA, etc.) and ensures these practices are implemented in blended learning environments.
- TS5 The school (or district) has a well-supported infrastructure for creating and maintaining blended education courses/programs.
- TS6 The school (or district) provides ongoing support and training to teachers, staff, and students in the use of technology tools and strategies that enhance blended learning.
- TS-A Teachers and administrators can easily track student progress, attendance, and participation across both modalities.
- TS-B The school ensures that every student has consistent access to appropriate devices and internet at school and home.

Course Development and Instructional Design

- CD1 Blended courses/programs are designed with alignment between learning objectives, course materials, learning activities and assessments to ensure that students achieve measurable learning outcomes.
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- CD 2 The school (or district) identifies and follows quality standards to guide the design, delivery, and evaluation of blended instruction.
 - CD3 Blended learning courses are developed (or reviewed) using a school (or district) approved process that promotes consistency in navigation, technology tools, and instructional design across courses.
 - CD4 Blended courses are intentionally designed to combine face-to-face and online learning experiences in ways that support student engagement and achievement of learning outcomes.
 - CD5 Blended learning courses are regularly reviewed using school (or district) approved quality standards and updated to enhance student engagement and support learning goals.
 - CD6 Blended courses/programs are designed to be inclusive of all students and their learning needs.
 - CD7 Blended learning course design and development incorporates student-centered instruction and student engagement.
 - CD8 Blended course design promotes meaningful interaction and engagement between teachers and students.
 - CD9 Blended learning tasks and assignments are designed to be developmentally appropriate and manageable for students within the expected instructional timeframe.
 - CD10 A systematic process is established and followed for evaluating the effectiveness of current and emerging technologies to support learning and achievement of learning outcomes.
 - CD12 Blended courses are American Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant and adhere to Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAGs).
 - CD13 Teachers and instructional staff contribute to the design and development of blended learning experiences in collaboration with school (or district) curriculum and technology teams.
 - CD-B Curriculum in both the online and in-person components is tightly aligned to state academic standards and learning progressions (as applicable).

Course Structure

- CS1 Blended learning courses provide students and families with clear information about learning goals, expectations, materials, evaluation methods, and the course schedule.
 - CS2 All students enrolled in a blended learning course have access to the library, digital tools, and learning resources they need to succeed, whether learning in-person or online.
 - CS3 Expectations for assignments, participation, grading, and teacher communication and feedback are clearly communicated to students and families in blended learning courses.
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- CS4 Students and families have easy access to technology help, academic support, and services for students with disabilities through the blended learning environment.
 - CS5 Expectations for student behavior, both online and in the classroom, are clearly communicated within the blended learning environment.
 - CS6 Instructional materials are easily accessible to the student, easy to use, with an ability to be accessed by multiple operating systems, applications and devices.
 - CS7 Teachers use strategies in blended learning to build a respectful, welcoming environment that supports meaningful participation for all students.
 - CS8 The structure of the blended learning course is clear, intuitive, and easy for students to navigate.
 - CS-A Clearly defined norms for attendance, participation, and behavior in both settings are communicated.

Teaching and Learning

- TL1 Student-to-student and teacher-to-student interactions are intentionally built into blended learning through structured activities that support collaboration and connection.
- TL2 Feedback on student work is clear, supportive, and delivered in a timely way across both online and face-to-face activities.
- TL3 Teachers use evidence-based practices to create an engaged, learning-focused presence across all modalities of the course.
- TL4 Teachers approach blended learning as one cohesive experience, using specific strategies to maintain an engaging and learning-focused presence both online and in-person.
- TL-A Learning is seamless and interconnected across modalities, not fragmented or duplicative.

Teacher Support

- FS1 The school (or district) provides timely technical assistance to teachers before and during the development and delivery of blended learning courses.
 - FS2 Teachers have access to training, assistance, and support for course development and effective teaching with technology across a variety of modalities.
 - FS3 Teachers receive guidance in assessing, identifying and responding to plagiarism, copyright compliance, and academic integrity - including effective and ethical use of artificial intelligence (AI).
 - FS4 Teachers receive ongoing professional development in blended teaching and learning.
 - FS5 Expectations for teacher engagement (e.g., response time to students and families, availability, and communication protocols) are clearly established, communicated, and consistently followed.
 - FS6 Teachers are provided administrative and technological support for ensuring that course materials are ADA compliant.
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- FS7 Teachers are provided with information and resources on accessibility standards to ensure that all students can effectively engage in blended learning environments.
 - FS8 Teachers are provided support and resources to implement best practices in blended teaching and learning.
 - FS-B Teachers receive ongoing training on best practices in blended instruction, including classroom management in blended contexts, formative assessment, and student engagement.

Student Support

- LS1 Before starting a blended learning program, students) are advised about the minimum technology skills, equipment and software needed to participate successfully in the program.
- LS3 During the course or program, students will be guided on how to find the information and materials they need using online tools like library databases, digital archives, news websites, and free educational resources (OER).
- LS4 Students have access to appropriate technical assistance and technical support staff.
- LS7 The school (or district) provides guidance/tutorials for students on the use of all forms of technologies used for course delivery.
- LS-C Students receive instruction tailored to their grade level on AI literacy and safe, ethical, and responsible use of technology in digital learning environments.
- LS-D Structures are in place for frequent, two-way communication between teachers/schools and families using accessible tools (email, apps, phone calls, etc.).
- LS-E Comprehensive, 3lded orientations are provided for both students and caregivers that introduce learning platforms, expectations, schedules, and support services.
- LS-G Blended programs include built-in supports for students like translation tools for non-English students and captioning, screen readers, and individualized accommodations for students with disabilities.

Evaluation and Assessment

- EA1 The program is regularly reviewed using established standards, such as state guidelines or expectations from recognized educational organizations.
 - EA2 A variety of data (academic and administrative data) are used to regularly evaluate program effectiveness in order to facilitate continuous improvement.
 - EA3 Intended learning outcomes at the course and grade level are reviewed regularly to ensure alignment, clarity, utility, appropriateness, and effectiveness.
 - EA4 A clear process is established and implemented to regularly evaluate support services provided to both teachers and students.
 - EA5 A systematic process is in place and followed for the assessment of student retention in blended courses and programs.
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- EA6 Program demonstrates compliance with accessibility standards (i.e., WCAG and ADA).
 - EA7 Course evaluations collect student feedback on the effectiveness of the teacher and the educational experience.
 - EA8 Blended courses are held to the same standards as any modality of face-to-face or online courses.
 - EA10 A process is in place and followed for the assessment of students, teachers, staff, and school (or district) satisfaction with the blended learning program(s).
 - EA-B Ongoing feedback loops from all stakeholders are in place to provide input on blended program effectiveness and for continuous improvement of the program.
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