



Fast Facts about Online-only Schools

Online-only schools are very different from online courses or blended programs that use a mix of traditional teaching and supports and online coursework.

Numerous studies have shown conclusively that:

- Virtual (online) schools produce significantly worse academic results than brick and mortar public schools or blended programs.
- Online schools are run by businesses that take state funding, cut costs to ensure greater profits, and move students backward academically.
- There is practically **no accountability** for full-time online schools. Because all schoolwork is done online, virtual teachers have no idea whether students are doing the work or whether parents or tutors are actually completing the exercises to inflate grades. Student performance on standardized assessments is abysmal.

A 2019 National Education Policy Center study recommended that states “slow or stop” enrollment in online-only or virtual schools, “given the overwhelming evidence of poor performance by full-time virtual and blended schools.”

A 2017 RAND Corporation/New York University study found that students with low test scores who enroll in online-only schools tend to fall even further behind.

A 2015 Stanford University CREDO study of taxpayer-funded, full-time virtual schools nationwide found that, compared to their traditional public school peers, **students lose:**

- 180 days of learning in math (as if they did not attend school at all for a year)
- 72 days, or half a year, in reading

One of the earliest states to experiment with virtual schools, Pennsylvania paid virtual school companies \$10,000 per student only to find that 100% of the cyber schools had “significantly worse” outcomes than their traditional public school counterparts. The performance of these schools has not improved over time.