EDUCATION COMMISSION
OF THE STATES

# Online Schools and Course Offerings Overview

NM Legislative Education Study Committee

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# Who we are

The essential, indispensable member of any team addressing education policy.

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Your education policy team.

# What we do

We believe in the power of learning from experience and we know informed policymakers create better education policy.

# How we do it

As your education policy team, we research, report, counsel and convene:

- **Research** key education topics.
- **Report** on education policies.
- **Counsel** as third-party experts.
- **Convene** education leaders.

# Impact of policy on online education

- Existence of options
- Access to options by students
- Choice policies
- Graduation requirements
- Funding
- Teacher requirements
- Seat time requirements
- Accountability requirements
- Data privacy

# Definition of terms

- Fulltime online: student receives all instruction via technology in all courses. May have elements of in person social interaction and activities.
- Supplemental online: student receives instruction for some portion of their subject matter via technology
- Blended learning: student attends physical campus but receives instruction both via technology and traditional methods.

# Student Population

- Traditional students
- English language learners
- Students identified with special needs
- Dropouts (credit recovery)
- Gifted and talented
- Dual enrollment
- Rural areas with teacher shortages
- Students seeking alternative environment for various reasons

# Where is it provided?

- Home
- Brick and mortar school
- Site-based delivery
- Combination of home and site-based

# Who provides online instruction?

- State funded entity that is non-profit (CO) or for-profit (FL)
- School districts
- Charter Schools
- Higher education institutions
- Non-profit company (educational provider)
- For-profit company (educational provider)
- Public and private options

# National Trends and Data for Online

- 5 states require an online course for high school graduation (AL, AR, FL, MI, VA).
- 24 states explicitly define or permit online charter schools in state law.
- Fulltime online charter schools operate in 30 states  where all students in the state have access and served over 315,000 students in SY 2013–14.

- Eleven states have online course choice policies or programs that are allowing students to choose online courses from one or more providers.
- State 'virtual schools' are operating in 26 states and provide over 740,000 supplemental online enrollments collectively.

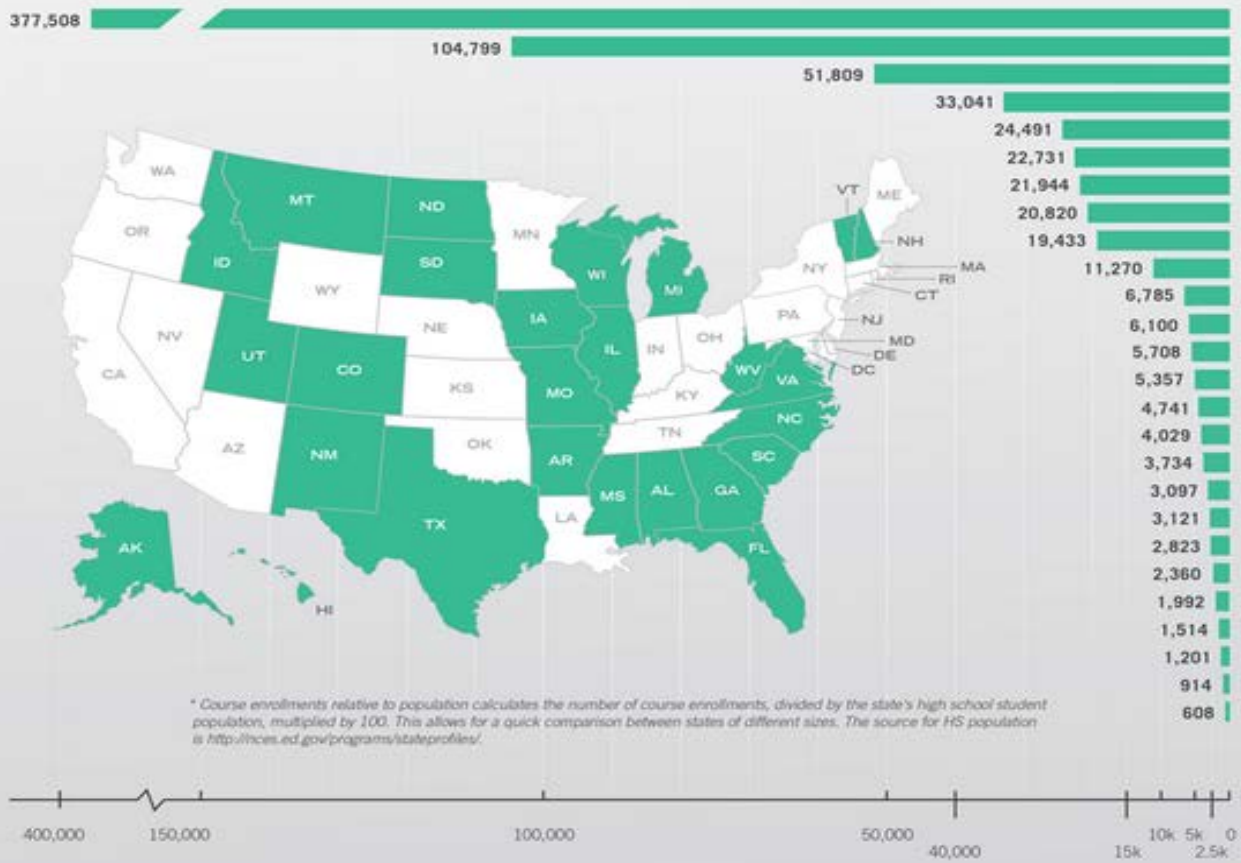
## State virtual schools offering online courses

- created by legislation or by a state level agency or administered by a state education agency.
- funded by a state appropriation or grant or federal or private foundation grants
- Purpose: providing online learning opportunities across the state.

2014

# States with State Virtual Schools

FIGURE 1: COURSE ENROLLMENTS IN STATE VIRTUAL SCHOOLS




| State | SVS course enrollments SY 2013-14 | SVS YoY change from 2013 | Course enrollments relative to population* |
|---|---|---|---|
| FL | 377,508 | -8% | 48% |
| NC | 104,799 | +11% | 24% |
| AL | 51,809 | 0% | 24% |
| GA | 33,041 | +28% | 7% |
| SC | 24,491 | +46% | 12% |
| NH | 22,731 | +29% | 37% |
| MI | 21,944 | +5% | 4% |
| ID | 20,820 | +9% | 25% |
| VA | 19,433 | +49% | 5% |
| WV | 11,270 | +87% | 14% |
| MT | 6,785 | -15% | 16% |
| ND | 6,100 | +91% | 20% |
| TX | 5,708 | -50% | 0% |
| WI | 5,357 | +6% | 2% |
| UT | 4,741 | -54% | 3% |
| SD | 4,029 | -1% | 11% |
| AR | 3,734 | +87% | 3% |
| IL | 3,097 | +3% | 0% |
| NM | 3,121 | +5% | 3% |
| VT | 2,823 | +188% | 10% |
| MS | 2,360 | -24% | 2% |
| MO | 1,992 | +23% | 1% |
| HI | 1,514 | -17% | 3% |
| IA | 1,201 | -3% | 1% |
| CO | 914 | -9% | 0% |
| AK | 608 | +82% | 2% |

** Course enrollments relative to population calculates the number of course enrollments, divided by the state's high school student population, multiplied by 100. This allows for a quick comparison between states of different sizes. The source for HS population is http://nces.ed.gov/programs/stateprofiles/.*

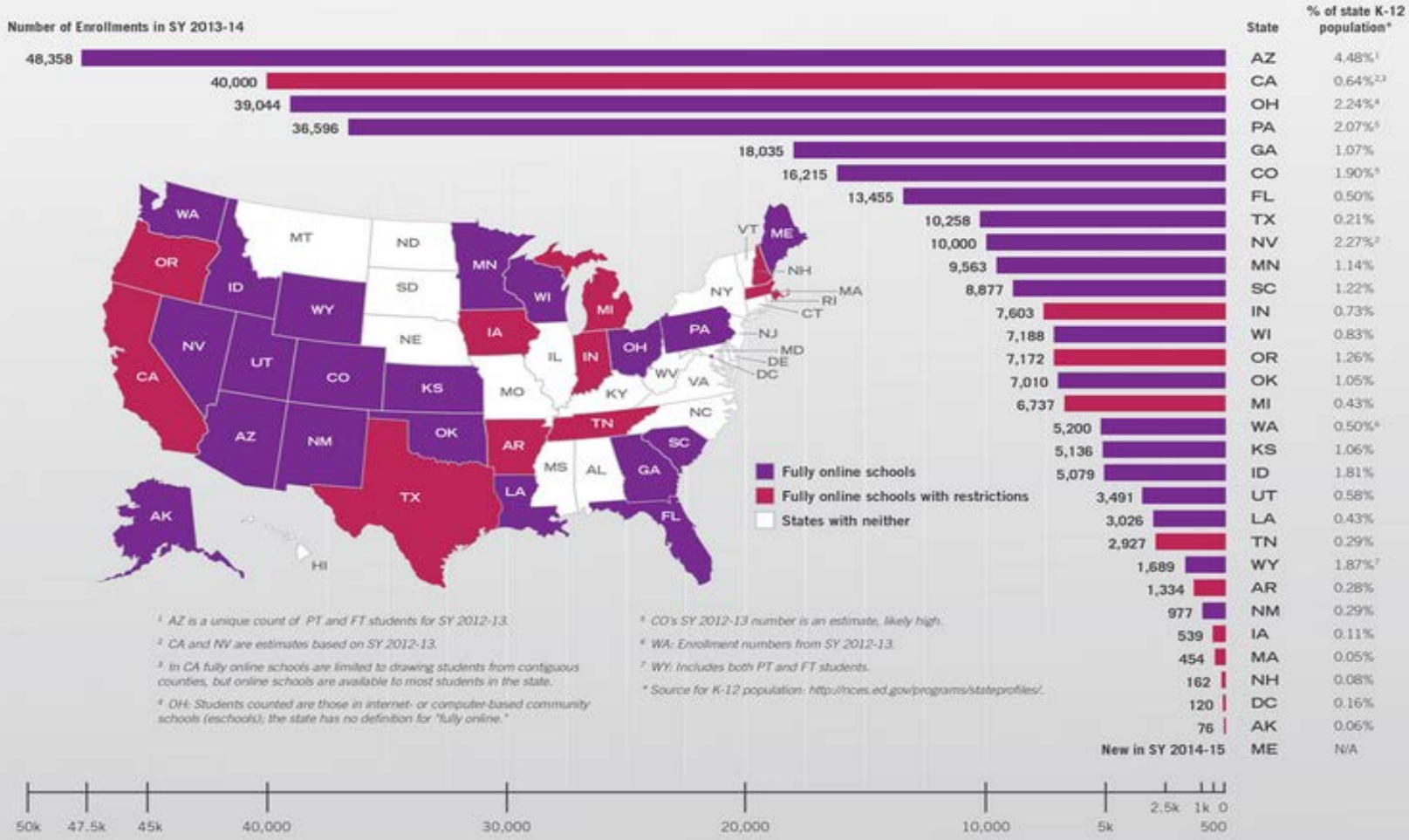
Source:*Keeping Pace with K-12 Digital Learning: An Annual Review of Policy and Practice (2014)*

- Thirty states have state online schools serving 316,320 in 2013–14.
- Many are charter schools or schools run by districts that attract students from other districts across the state.
- No state has more than about 3% of their students attending fully online schools.

2014

# States with Statewide Fully Online Schools

FIGURE 2: NUMBER OF STUDENT ENROLLMENTS BY STATE AND PERCENTAGE OF STATE'S K-12 POPULATION




Source:*Keeping Pace with K-12 Digital Learning: An Annual Review of Policy and Practice (2014)*

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# Strong growth in enrollment of online schools

- Large online schools operated by for-profit education management organizations (EMOs) continuing to dominate this sector.

- Operating 40.2% of online schools but accounting for 70.7% of all enrollments.

# Performance Data Cont.

- Online school academic performance overall on state math and writing assessments are consistently lower than state averages and brick and mortar school performance.
- Charter online schools lagged behind their district operated online schools in terms of acceptable school performance ratings: 37.6% compared with 44.9%.

# Performance Data (2013-14 Data)

- One in four online schools received no performance rating at all.
- 41% were judged academically acceptable.
- Independent online schools were more likely to receive an acceptable rating than online schools operated by private EMOs: 48% compared with 27.6%.

# Academic Oversight

- Most states have academic performance and accountability for all public schools that also applies to online schools.
- MN: requires 3 years of qualitative review.
- PA: reviews whether an online charter school is meeting the goals set forth in its application.

# Academic Oversight--Arizona

- Schools are placed on probationary status until they have proven they can deliver instruction effectively.
- If a student fails, a conference with parents and teachers is held to determine whether continuing in an online program is in the best interest of the student.

# 4-year Graduation Rate (2013-14 Data)

| | Number of schools with data | 4 year graduation rate |
|---|---|---|
| Independent | 102 | 50.87% |
| Nonprofit | 9 | 40.50% |
| For-Profit | 63 | 40.90% |
| K12 Inc. | 30 | 37.83% |
| Connections Acad. | 14 | 47.06% |
| District | 57 | 44.70% |
| Charter | 117 | 42.90% |
| All Virtual Schools | 174 | 43.80% |
| National Average | NA | 78.60% |

**Source: National Education Policy Center:** ***Virtual Schools in the U.S. 2015: Politics, Performance, Policy, and Research Evidence***

# Data

For-Profit EMOS

- Highest student teacher ratio 40:1.
- Enrolled an average 1,166 students.
- 27% of online schools received a satisfactory performance rating.
- 40.9% graduation rate.

Non-Profit EMOS

- Enrolled average of 350 students
- 48% of independent online schools received a satisfactory rating.

# Method for Funding?

- By enrollment (CO)
- By completion and performance (FL)
- By percentage of time in online (CO/AZ)

# Who is held accountable?

- Online charter schools are overseen by charter school authorizers, which may be school districts or other entities, and usually a board of directors.
- District-run online schools that are not charter schools are overseen by school districts that created the program.

- Online programs-within-a-school are held accountable as part of the larger school in which they reside. (CO/FL)
- Statewide or multiple district schools are held accountable by a single state authorizer or agency. (CO/FL)

# Bad Actors?

- States with a single online authorizing entity have additional oversight of online schools and programs (CO, OK, FL, MI,PA).
- Online charter schools in states with accountability and sanctions for authorizers have measures in place.

- Proactive measures in place can potentially prevent school failures:
  - AZ: all schools given probationary status initially.
  - MI: schools must demonstrate experience with digital instructional delivery.
  - OH: schools must meet standards established for online programs.

# Teacher Certification

- Almost all states require online instructors to be state-certified teachers.
- Some states allow university faculty to serve as online teachers.
- MN: requires all teachers to be trained to deliver digital and blended learning content.

- Six states have adopted voluntary online teaching endorsements.
- Less than 2% of colleges and universities provided any content related to online schooling in their pre-service or in-service teacher programs.
- Less than 40% of online school teachers reported receiving any professional development before they began teaching online.

# Funding

- Many states funded online schools at 30-50% less than brick-and-mortar schools.
- National average per pupil funding for online schools: $6,400.
- National average per pupil funding for brick-and-mortar schools: $11,282.

- States have varying models:
  - Same amount as brick-and-mortar schools.
  - Same amount as a student in the resident district receives.
  - Statewide minimum or base as established in state school funding formula. (CO)
  - Varying reduced percentages of state per pupil funding or average daily membership/attendance funding. (AZ)

# Funding Oversight

- Charter schools are currently required to submit an annual audit per federal requirements.
- Some states require monthly reports (PA).
- State reviews and audits annually also happen by state departments of education or a separate authorizing entity for online providers. (OK/NV)

# How is funding determined?

- Funded at state minimum per student amounts with options to increase amount by additional weighted factors (CO).
- Funded as a percentage of per student funding (AZ/FL).

# Should there be limits?

- Number of schools allowed in a district or statewide
- Class size
- % of students from a school district
- % or number cap on ensuring residence students enroll
- Student seeks permission to enroll

# Additional Areas to Consider

- Instructional supplies/materials
- Special Education services
- Reporting requirements and frequency
- Student eligibility
- Oversight and Authorization

- Research key education topics.
- Report on education policies.
- Counsel as third-party experts.
- Convene education leaders.

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| | Arizona | Colorado | Florida |
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| **Types of providers/schools** | School districts | Fulltime online multi-district programs | Florida Virtual School (FLVS) full-time and part-time programs (created in statute) |
| | charter schools | Fulltime online single district program | District Virtual Instruction Programs (VIPs) |
| | no statewide virtual school | Fulltime online single district schools | District franchises of FLVS |
| | | Fulltime single district programs | virtual courses delivered to students in traditional schools |
| | | Single district virtual course providers | district delivery of virtual courses to students in nontraditional schools |
| | | Statewide nonprofit virtual course provider (created in statute) | Virtual Charter Schools |
| | | | Blended learning opportunities in brick and mortar traditional schools and charter schools |
| **Number of students** | 48,357 | 16,150 | 240,000 |
| **Limits on providers/schools** | Providers initially approved on probationary status for 3 years until academic performance can be verified. | | Students can only enroll in another district's virtual program if their district has selected it as one of the options for its students and has entered into an agreement with the other district to provide that option. Students may take individual online courses from another district whether or not the course is offered by their school district. |
| **Approval of Online Provider** | State Board of Education or State Board of Charter Schools | Unit of Online Education within CO Department of Education approves multi-district virtual course providers; School districts can create their own programs and be the virtual course provider for a single distict; statewide virtual course provider created and funded by the state. | Department of Education approves private program providers. DoE does not have to approve district virtual instruction programs- district is responsible and may contract with other providers for content, curriculum, and resources. |
| **Approval of Online School** | State Board of Education can approve a charter school or traditional school. | Online Division within CO Department of Education approves multi-district charter and district virtual schools; School districts can create their own single district schools and charter schools; State Charter School Insititue Board can approve single- and multi-district virtual schools. | Virtual charter schools must contract with a DOE approved provider or FLVS for its virtual education program & must submit application to district and be approved to operate a virtual charter |

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| **Oversight entities** | Charter School Authorizer or School District | For virtual schools, the authorizing school district or State Charter School Institute. Additional reporting requirements to the Unit of Online Education within the department of education for multi-district school and district providers exist for oversight. | Florida Department of Education |
| **Student requirements** | Must take state assessments or can't participate in online program following year | Must take state assessments | Must take state assessments |
| | Student log to verify attendance for funding purposes | Removed requirement that students be enrolled in traditional public schools immediately prior to fulltime online enrollment. | Must meet state compulsory attendance requirements. Although the parent or learning coach may log attendance, the online teachers and virtual school administrators are responsible for student attendance records and for monitoring and reporting attendance. |
| | All approved programs can serve any student residing in the state | | |
| **Reporting Requirements** | Annual | Annual report with comparison of virtual schools to state averages on assessments | Annual |
| | Student Achievement | Student Achievement and accountability | Student Achievement |
| | | Annual school reports as part of overall state accountability. State virtual course provider required to provide an annual report for continued funding. | Completion data for funding |
| | Student survey | enrollment trends | Assessments and liabilities; financial information |
| | Individual school reports required and compiled into single state report | postsecondary and workforce readiness measures | Stakeholder surveys |
| **Accountability** | Curriculum must be aligned to state standards. | Curriculum must be aligned to state standards. Schools receive individual school ratings and report cards and subject to performance plans equal to traditional brick and mortar schools. Programs have achievement and accountability results included in the school in which they are located. | Curiculum must be aligned to state standards. The provider, the school district or both receive school grades based on student performance on state testing. The provider earns a single grade for the performance of all its students statewide. |

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| **Funding** | Supplemental funding can be divided between brick and mortar and online depending on amount of time spent in each. | Individual student funding is divided between the traditional brick and mortar school and virtual course providers (excluding state nonprofit virtual course provider) depending on amount of time spent in each. State virtual course provider receives $580,000 state appropriation and cannot charge more than $200/course | Students only generate funding for successful course completions whether they are promoted or not. Districts/FLVS receive estimated funding throughout the year. Funding trued up at the end of the year after reporting of successful completions |
| | Fulltime funding for virtual charter schools is based on current year funding and percentage determined by grade level; funding for district online programs is based on prior year's funding. | Fulltime funding for single district students is equal to per pupil funding of the brick and mortar schools' students. Multi-district online schools receive the state minimum per pupil funding and Title 1 funding for eligible students. | Fulltime funding for virtual charter schools |
| **Other legislation** | 2013: Pilot program for outcome-based funding. No vendors able to comply with requirements, thus no implementation of program | Used to require annual virtual schools report but legislation changed to every 5 years. | First state to legislate that all K-12 students have access to fulltime and individual course online options with funding following the individual student. All virtual options are designated in law as public school choice options and advertised to parents and students. Funding is based on student successful completion and not seat time. |
| | 2014: two-year K-6 pilot program with state funding focusing on technology language development and literacy intervention programs with differentiated and individualized instruction. | | |
| **Blended Model** | Carpe Diem School 6-12 with on-site facilitators at support centers and requires 4 days of attendance | Enhanced Virtual Model early indicators show increased academic performance of students and original virtual schools are starting to move to blended learning model. | FLVS offers a blended learning model as do individual school districts in the state. |