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# Online Schools: Evidence on Performance

New Mexico Legislative Education Study Committee

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# Quick Tutorial

Most online education is “blended” with in-class time.  
65% of courses are taken by juniors and seniors.

Full-time online programs allow students to enroll and earn academic credit based on successful completion of courses provided by the online school.

Full-time online schools can be managed by a state, district, university, charter school, not-for-profit, for-profit or other institution.

# Quick Tutorial

## 447 full-time virtual schools

- Enrolled close to 262,000 students in 2013-2014
- One third K-5, one third 6 – 8 on 1<sup>st</sup> enrollment
- 33 States allow full-time virtual schools
- Even split charter - district

## Average enrollment differs by type of provider:

- For-profit EMO: 1027
- Non-profit EMO: 286
- Independently run: 266

Fewer minority or low-income students enrolled.

# Research Question

Compared to identical students in traditional public schools, how does the **average one-year academic progress** of students in cyber charter schools compare?

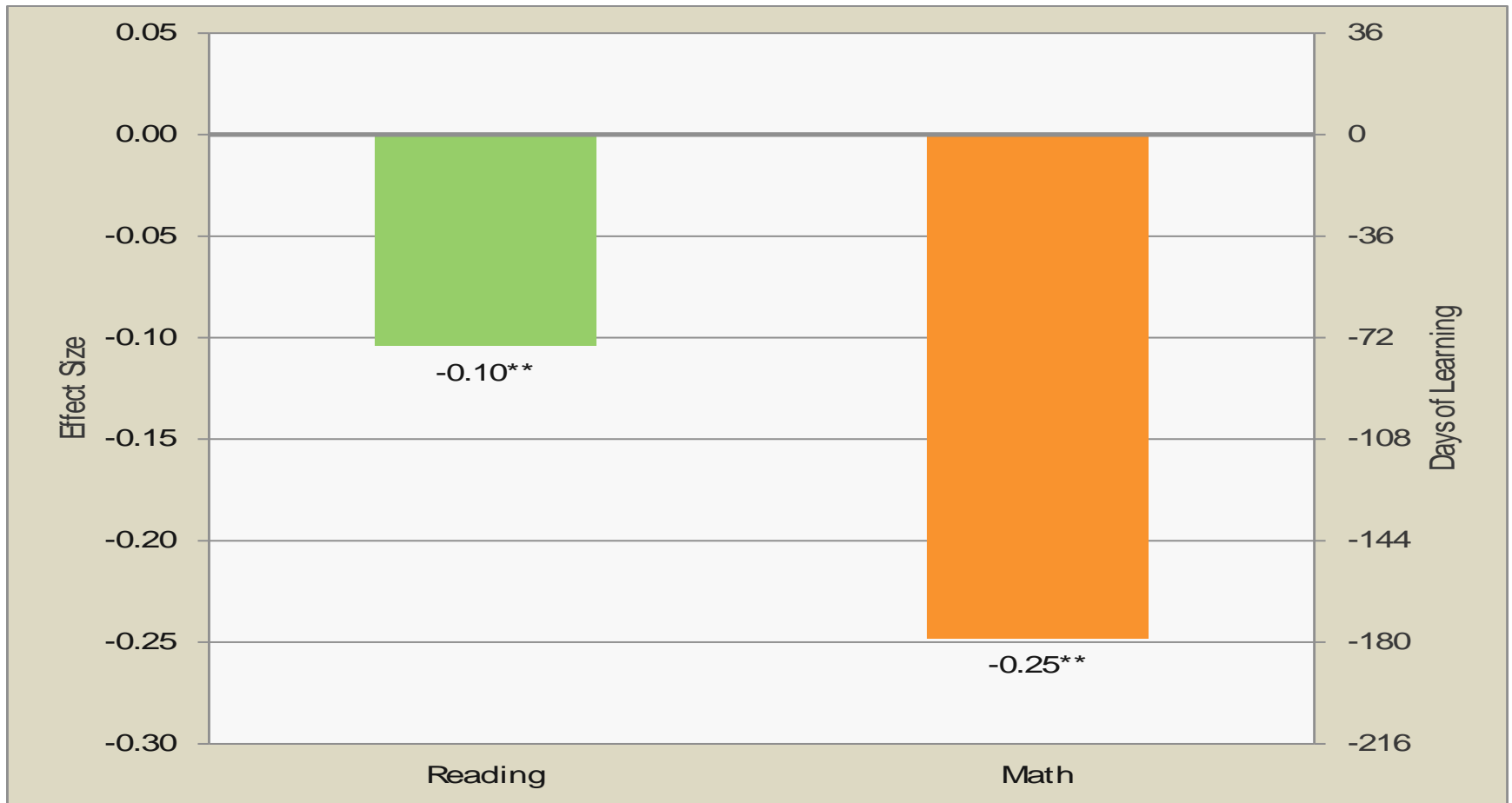
# Included States

- Arkansas
- Arizona
- California
- Colorado
- DC
- Florida
- Georgia
- Illinois
- Louisiana
- Michigan
- Minnesota
- New Mexico
- Nevada
- Ohio
- Oregon
- Pennsylvania
- Texas
- Utah
- Wisconsin

# Methods

- Matched Comparison
  - more details at [Credo.Stanford.edu](https://Credo.Stanford.edu)
- Pre-post enrollment comparisons
- Panel data analysis

# Overall Performance Online Charters vs TPS



\*\* Denotes significant at the .01 level.

# Reading Performance by State

## Online Charters vs TPS

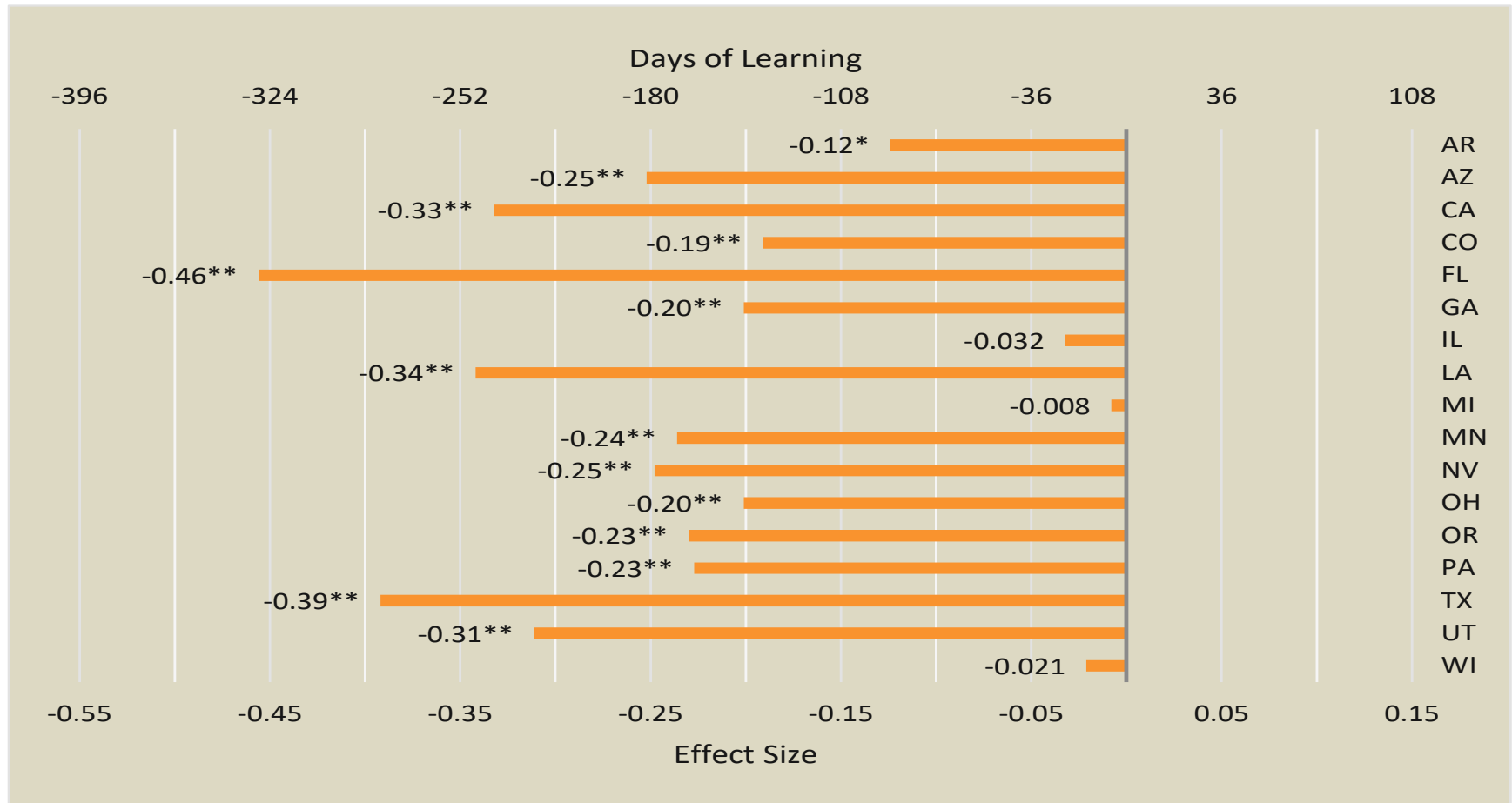


\*\* Denotes significant at the .01 level.

New Mexico results: -.12 (not sig.)

# Math Performance by State

## Online Charters vs TPS



\*\* Denotes significant at the .01 level.

New Mexico results: -.07 (not sig.)

# Performance by Race/Ethnicity

## Online Charters vs TPS

Racial-Ethnic Subpopulation	Reading	Days of Learning	Math	Days of Learning
White	-0.11**	-79	-0.25**	-180
Black	-0.08**	-58	-0.22**	-158
Hispanic	-0.11**	-79	-0.29**	-209
Asian/Pacific Islander	-0.09**	-65	-0.26**	-187
Native American	-0.12**	-86	-0.30**	-216
Multi-Racial	-0.09**	-65	-0.26**	-187

\*\* Denotes significant at the .01 level.



# Deeper Dive on Results

# Three areas of Inquiry

1. Do different students enroll in online schools?
2. Are there school-level attributes that explain the results?
3. Are there policy factors that relate to results?

# Student Factors

## ARE ONLINE STUDENTS MORE MOBILE?

Before enrolling in online:

9% for online students

8% for comparison students

After online enrollment:

15% for online students

8% for comparison students

# Student Factors

## ARE STUDENTS MORE TRAUMATIZED?

NCES 2015 : 22% of students report bullying

Petrosina et al: only 36% of bullied students report

Ergo: population estimate = 66% of all public school students bullied

Online bullying: 27% of students were bullied before enrolling  
(Edge Research, 2016)

# School Factors

## WHAT ATTRIBUTES OF SCHOOLS MATTER?

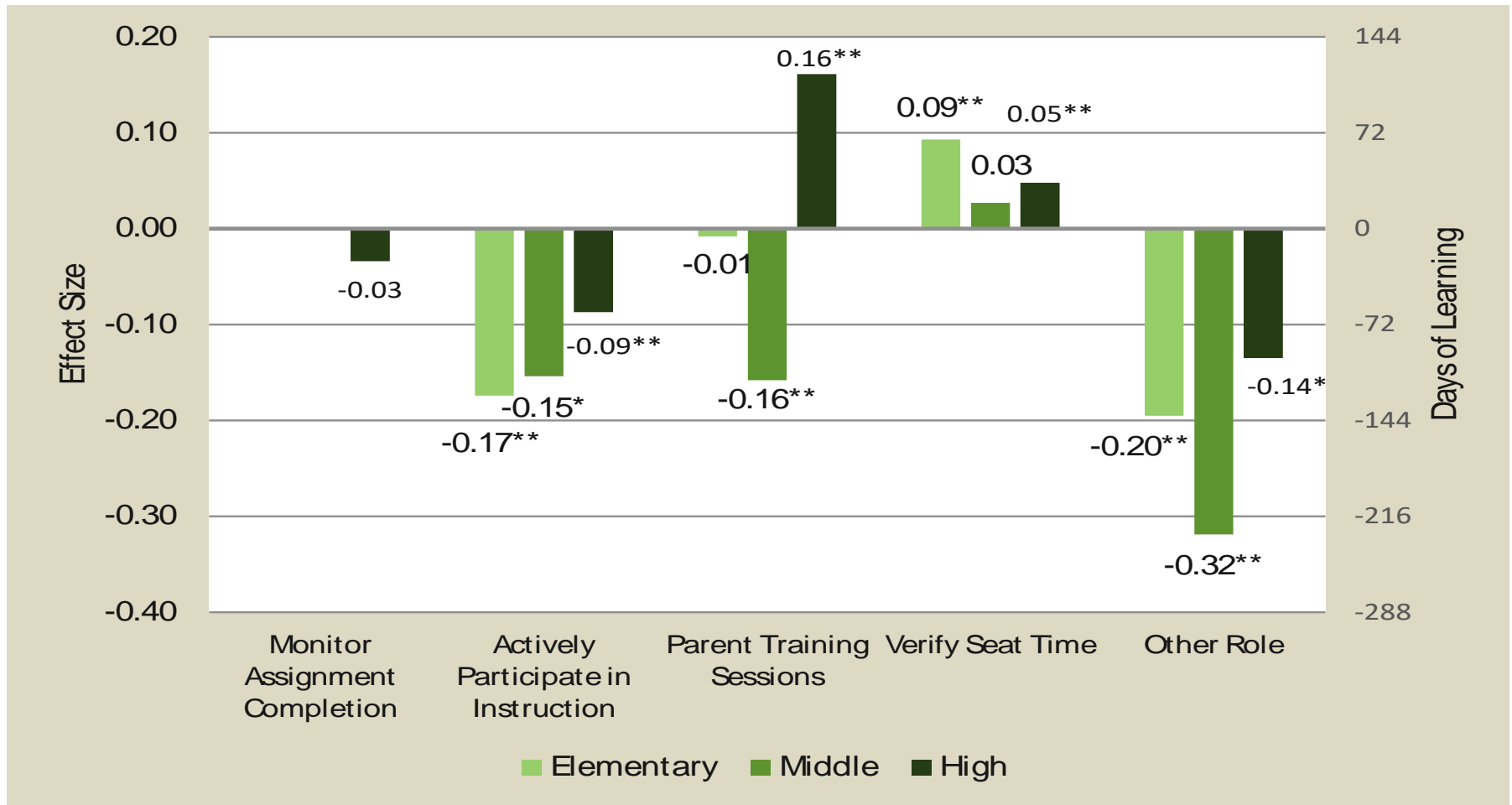
### Synchronous vs. asynchronous instruction

- Self-paced seems to work
- Number of active contact hours is very low
- Lack of progress monitoring – large negative role

### Assessments

- Frequency of assessments matters
- Providing assessment results to teachers matters

# Expected Parental Roles



# Policy Factors

POLICY	Math	Reading
Authorizer Oversight Fees	-0.21*	-0.12
For-profit	0.19	-0.11
Statewide enrollment	0.19	-0.11
Specialized Oversight Policy	0.20*	-0.19
Strength of Charter Law	0.33*	0.25*
Charter Law Ranking	0.32*	0.06

# Implications

1. Current online charter schools may be a good fit for some students, but the evidence suggests that online charters don't serve very well the students that currently attend these schools, much less the general population.
2. Current oversight policies in place may not be sufficient for online charter schools.
3. States should examine the current progress of existing online programs before allowing expansion.

# Issues

1. Need a common set of performance standards
2. Desperate need to innovate AND improve
3. Market based protections are *currently weak*
4. Isolation of students and parents
5. Authorizers face extreme information challenges



*Thank you!*