



K12 Inc. Responds to Report on Virtual Charter Schools

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HERNDON, Va., June 16, 2016 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- As a leading provider to online schools, K12 Inc. has collaborated with educators, policymakers, and organizations on best practices and policies for online and blended public schools. We strongly advocate for all charter school models. We have supported [student-centered](#) policy proposals for all schools, competency-based learning, and better metrics to improve [accountability](#).

The report by NACSA, NAPCS, and 50CAN is not collaborative. Very few, if any, charter school boards, educators, operators, parents or teachers in online charter schools were part of this report.

The report relies almost exclusively on a three-part study on online charter schools published last year. K12 [responded](#) to the study and provided a detailed analysis. We disagreed with the study's reliance on old academic data and the methodology which did not control or account for several key factors unique to typical full-time online schools, including: persistence and performance over time, date of enrollment, the effect of mobility, and the reasons why children leave their local school.

Data in the report are old (prior to 2012) and does not match what we see at K12-partner schools. For example, the report cites Ohio Virtual Academy as a large online public charter school with weak academic growth. Yet, according to the most recent test results available (2014-15), OHVA's school composite growth score was the highest possible in grades 6 – 8 and high school.

Most troubling is the report's call to consider "criteria for admission" for children. The report contends that parent choice (what the authors call "self-selection") is not working. Whether a charter school or not, online schools are public schools. They should be open to all eligible families and every child should be treated equally. Policies that restrict parent choice, or create perverse incentives for schools to turn away at-risk children or others deemed not to likely to succeed, should be rejected. They have no place in the school choice movement.

Families often choose online schools because they are fleeing a school or situation that wasn't working for their child, or for other reasons – bullying, special needs, medical issues, social or emotional challenges, safety concerns, academic problems, etc. For many families, online schools are the only available public school choice they have. Moving online schools out of the public charter school law does nothing to help these children.

The report recommends additional rules, regulations, and standards for full-time online public schools and its students while excluding other schools. Yet, if such education policies are viewed as likely to improve accountability, quality and results, why not apply them to all schools and students equally?

While policy is important, the most critical work we are doing every day is on behalf of the schools and students we serve. We understand the academic challenges, and we have made significant changes in recent years to meet these challenges (results not captured in data prior to 2012). We have invested in new academic initiatives, instructional and assessment programs, teacher hiring and training, and student support services to improve outcomes.

K12 has created new jobs and opportunities for thousands of teachers, graduated nearly 18,000 students since 2007, and has provided high quality curriculum, technology, academic programs and services to nearly 2,000 school districts and charter schools nationwide.

We look forward to continue working with those who share our commitment to expand education opportunities for all children, regardless of academic, geographic, or socio-economic circumstance. We are a company of educators dedicated to putting students first.

To view the original version on PR Newswire, visit: <http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/k12-inc-responds-to-report-on-virtual-charter-schools-300286195.html>

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