



COLORADO DEPARTMENT *of* EDUCATION

Summary Report for Online Schools and Programs

Submitted to:

**State Board of Education
House Education Committee
Senate Education Committee**

By:

**Office of Blended and Online Learning
Colorado Department of Education**

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Blended Learning Overview
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Executive Summary

Pursuant to CRS 22-30.7-103 (3) (h), the Office of Blended and Online Learning is required to prepare a summary report to be submitted on or before June 1, 2014 to the state board and the education committees of the house of representatives, the senate, or any successor committees. Previously, the summary report was required to be prepared and presented on an annual basis. The passage of House Bill 11-1277 repealed the annual requirement for the Summary Report and also the annual reporting mandates that were required of all online schools and programs in Colorado. Barring any future statutory changes that modify the current summary report requirements, the next summary report will be prepared and presented in five years and every five years thereafter.

The information presented in the Summary Report for Online Schools and Programs includes an examination of data focusing on online school performance in comparison to state averages, enrollment trends, accountability ratings of online schools and post-secondary work force readiness. The data examined in the Summary Report is comprised of information collected by various Colorado Department of Education data collections for online schools that have a school code. The information being presented includes data that was collected since the release of the last Summary Report in 2011. In addition, the report will also include an overview of current trends in blended learning implementation in multi-district online schools.

Enrollment

Student enrollments in online schools and programs have increased in recent years, with the exception of 2013; in which there was a small decrease in students reported as being enrolled in an online school or program. Participation reported by funding code for all students in online schools or programs and enrollment by school code for multi-district and single district online schools will be presented.

Performance

Online school performance on state assessments has been lower across all grade levels and content areas than that of its brick and mortar counterpart. In recent years, a number of multi-district online schools are showing a marginal increase in student performance on state assessments.

Accountability

Online school accountability has been a growing concern as many online schools are placed on the 5 year accountability clock. Online schools in Priority Improvement or Turnaround are increasing in number.

Online School and Program Financial Reporting

Pursuant to statute, districts and BOCES that have online schools or programs must submit a financial report detailing expenditures. The Online Expenditure Report is collected with the financial reporting collection completed annually by CDE.

Post-Secondary and Workforce Readiness

Post-secondary and workforce readiness is an area in which online schools have performed below the state. Increases in graduation rates, as well as decreases in dropout rates, have shown some improvement in recent years.

Upcoming Trends: Blended Learning

The growth of blended learning in online schools is evolving. Many formerly fully virtual online schools have chosen to implement a face to face component to their offerings.

Introduction

There are 36 online schools operating in Colorado presently. Of the 36 online schools, 26 are certified as multi-district online schools and 10 are recognized as single district online schools. An online school as defined in statute means a full-time, on-line education school authorized pursuant to this article that delivers a sequential program of synchronous or asynchronous instruction from a teacher to a student primarily through the use of the internet. An on-line school has an assigned school code and operates with its own administrator, a separate budget, and a complete instructional program. An online school is responsible for fulfilling all reporting requirements that are required of all public schools in Colorado. Online schools are also held to the same state and federally mandated accountability processes as are all Colorado public schools. In addition to the 36 online schools, there are also 16 single district online programs in operation.

Types of Online Schools and Programs

Online schools and programs offer a diverse menu of options for students in Colorado. No longer is the fully-virtual online model, where a student accesses courses remotely, the only model offered. While it is still a choice for many families, there are many different options at a variety of online schools and programs for students. Blended learning is expanding among online schools as evidenced by the addition of face to face offerings by formerly fully virtual online schools. An AEC or Alternative Education Campus is a school that has a specialized mission to serve high-risk students and is becoming more prevalent among online schools as well.

Online programs, which are contained within an existing brick and mortar school or district configuration, are programs that offer in-district students options that range from credit recovery to concurrent enrollment options. Online programs may serve as an alternative for expelled students, medically home-bound students, or as an alternative school or course choice option for mainstream students. Additionally, an online program may be full or part-time and may offer a face to face option for in district students.

Multi-district Online Schools

Multi-district online schools may enroll students throughout the state of Colorado as opposed to only enrolling in-district students. Many multi-district online schools serve student populations that are drawn from around the state while others serve students from districts in and around their region. Pursuant to C.R.S. statute 22-30.7-106 § (1), a multi-district online school can be authorized by a school district, the charter school institute or a BOCES. Among the multi-district online schools in existence, two are authorized by the state Charter School Institute; two are authorized by a BOCES and the remaining multi-district online schools are district authorized. Of the district authorized multi-district online schools, in addition to the aforementioned multi-district online schools authorized by the Charter School Institute; four are district authorized charter schools.

TABLE 1: Multi-district Online Schools

AUTHORIZER	MULTI-DISTRICT ONLINE SCHOOL	GRADES CERTIFIED TO SERVE
Academy District 20	Academy Online School	K-12
Colorado Springs School District 11	ACHIEVE Online	6-12
Boulder Valley School District	Boulder Universal	K-12
Branson School District	Branson School Online	K-12
Academy District 20	College Pathways (The Classical Academy)	7-12
Charter School Institute	Colorado Calvert Academy	K-8
Mapleton Public Schools	Colorado Connections Academy	K-12
Adams 12 Five Star Schools	Colorado Virtual Academy (COVA)	K-12
Colorado Digital BOCES	Colorado Preparatory Academy	K-12

Denver Public Schools	Denver Online High School	9-12
Douglas County School District	eDCSD Colorado Cyberschool	K-12
Edison School District 54JT	Edison Academy	6-12
Greeley-Evans School District 6	Engage Online Academy	6-12
Falcon School District 49	Falcon Virtual Academy	K-12
Byers School District 32-J	Great Plains Academy	K-12
Falcon School District 49	Guided Online Academic Learning (GOAL) Academy**	9-12
Douglas County School District	Hope Online Learning Academy Co-op**	K-12*
Julesburg School District RE-1	Insight School of Colorado	6-12
Jefferson County Public Schools	Jeffco's 21st Century Virtual Academy**	7-12
Karval School District Re-3	Karval Online Education	K-12
Monte Vista School District	Monte Vista Online Academy	6-12
Poudre School District RE-1	PSD Global Academy	K-12
Charter School Institute	Provost Online Academy	9-12
San Juan BOCES	Southwest Colorado eSchool (San Juan BOCES)	7-12
Thompson School District	Thompson Online	K-12
Vilas RE-5 School District	Vilas Online	K-8

*Hope Online Learning consists of Elementary, Middle, and High School with separate school codes for each.

**Designated as an Alternative Education Campus (AEC)

Educational Service Providers (ESP) in Multi-district Online Schools

An ESP or Education Service Provider is a for-profit organization that an online school may contract with to provide management services. Currently, seven multi-district online schools contract with an ESP.

TABLE 2: Online Schools Contracted with ESP for Management Services

MULTI-DISTRICT ONLINE SCHOOL	EDUCATIONAL SERVICE PROVIDER
Colorado Calvert Academy	Calvert Education Services
Colorado Connections Academy	Connections Education
Colorado Preparatory Academy	K12, Inc.
Colorado Virtual Academy (COVA)	K12, Inc.
Great Plains Academy	Mosaica Online
Insight School of Colorado	K12, Inc.
Provost Academy-Colorado	Edison Learning

Single District Online Schools

A single district school has a school code, operates with its own administrator, a separate budget and a complete instructional program. A single district online school enrolls in-district students and may enroll up to ten out of district students. Of the ten single district online schools, two are designated as an AEC or Alternative Education Campus.

TABLE 3: Single District Online Schools

AUTHORIZER	SINGLE DISTRICT ONLINE SCHOOL
Pueblo 70	70 Online*
Aurora Public Schools	APS Online*
School District 27J	Bolt Academy
Fremont RE-1	Canon Online Academy

Center 26JT	Center Virtual Academy
Delta County	Delta Virtual Academy
Mesa County Valley 51	Grande River Virtual Academy
Montrose County RE-1J	Peak Virtual Academy
St. Vrain RE 1J	St. Vrain Global Academy
Eagle	World Academy

*Designated as an Alternative Education Campus (AEC)

Single District Online Programs

A single district online program is one in which in-district students have access to. As opposed to multi-district or single district schools, accountability for each student in an online program is attributed back to the designated school that houses the online program. Single district online programs tend to have smaller enrollments. If a single district online program has more than 100 students enrolled, it is considered a school and will need to apply for a school code. Purposes for online programs include credit recovery, enrichment, concurrent enrollment, and core coursework.

TABLE 4: Single District Online Programs

SCHOOL DISTRICT	ONLINE PROGRAM
Clear Creek School District RE-1	Clear Creek Online Academy
Garfield 16	Colorado Courseware A+nyWhere Learning System
Widefield	D3 My Way
Colorado Springs 11	Extended Learning Program
North Conejos	Heartlight Academy Online
Holyoke School District RE-1J	Holyoke Alternative School
Littleton	LPS Voyager
Cripple Creek	Mountain eCademy
Platte Canyon RE-1	PCHS Online
Weld RE 5J Johnstown Miliken	RHS Online
Pueblo 60	Ridge Academy
Park County RE-2	South Park Online
East Otero	Tigers Online Program
Park County RE-2	Virtual Village-Lake George Charter School
Adams 50	Westminster Virtual Academy
Woodland Park District RE-2	Woodland Park Online Program

Student Enrollment at Online Schools & Programs

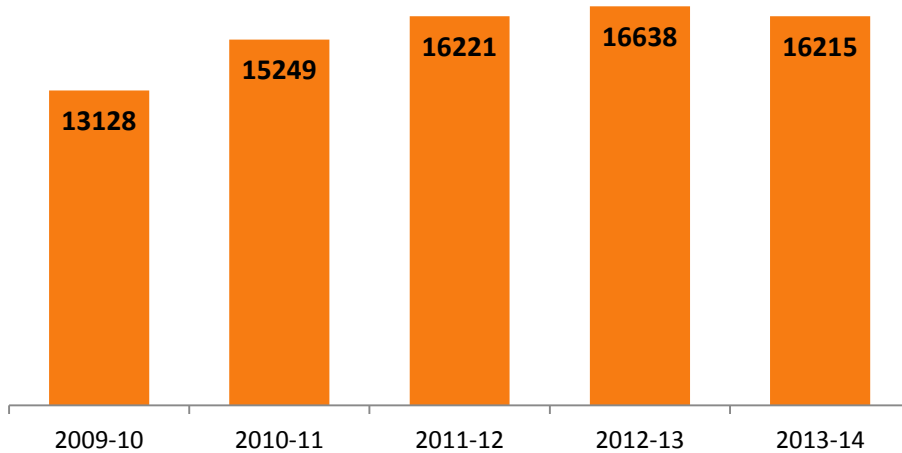
A Look at the Past 5 Years of Online ¹

The percent of students enrolled in online schools and programs has increased 24% between SY 2009-10 and SY 2012-13, peaking at 16,638 students in SY 2012-13. Today, enrollment is down slightly at 16,215 students compared to the previous school year.

Online enrollment represents 1.8% of the total public school enrollment.

¹ The Pupil Enrollment Count Day, also referred to as October Count, is the one day membership count in which districts report all students who are actively enrolled and attending classes. The figures in this report are derived from the October Count data collection.

FIGURE 1: Colorado Online Enrollment between SY2009-10 and SY2013-14²



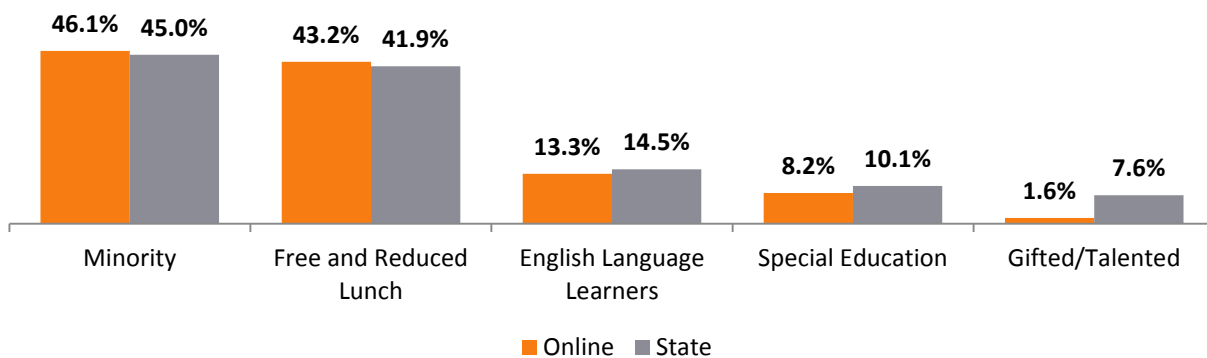
24%

Increase in online student enrollment between SY 2009-10 and SY 2012-13.

Who is Participating?³

Enrollment data for SY 2013-14, highlighted in Figure 2, shows that online schools serve students with demographic characteristics that are similar to all public education students in Colorado. In SY2012, online schools served 7,470 minority students (46.1% of total online enrollment), 7,003 students who qualified for free or reduced-price lunch (43.2%), 2,151 English language learners (including Monitored Year 1 and Monitored Year 2) or 13.3% of online enrollment, 1,325 special education students (8.2%), and 253 gifted or talented students (1.3%). The proportion of students who are gifted or talented is less at online schools compared to the state average.

FIGURE 2: Online Enrollment by Student Characteristic Compared to Colorado Average



² Source: Colorado Education Statistics: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdereval/pupilcurrent>

³ Source: Colorado Education Statistics: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdereval/pupilcurrent>

Current Picture: Student Achievement

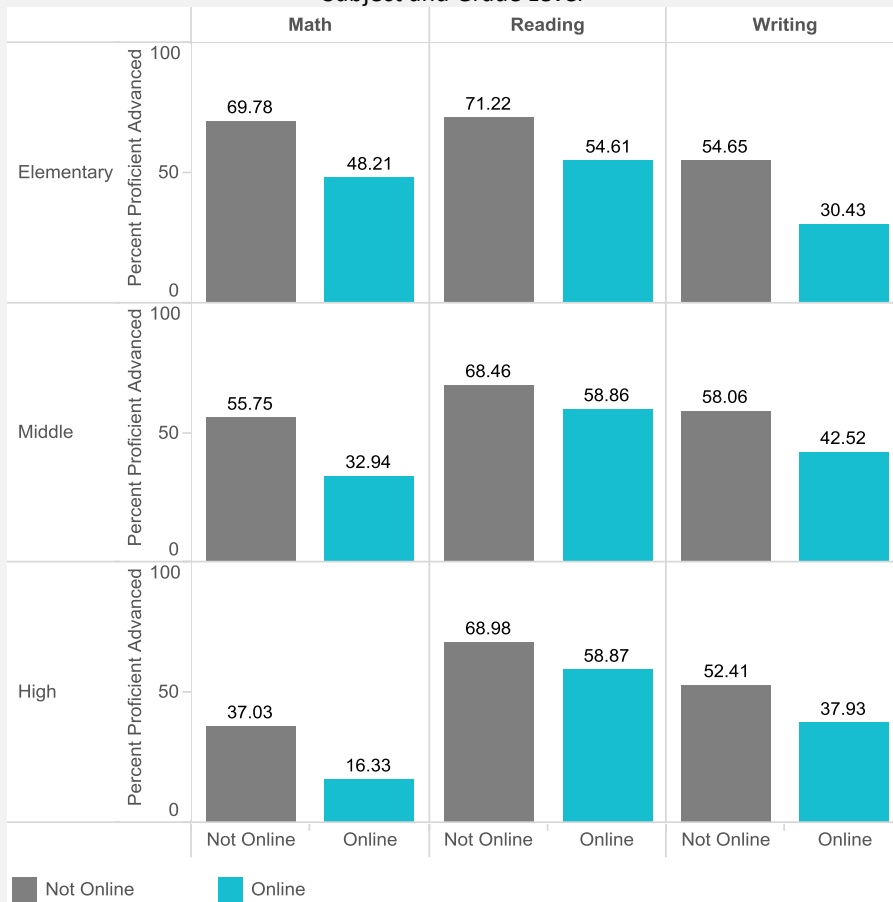
Background

For the 2011 through 2013 schools years, the state assessment for Colorado was the CSAP (Colorado Student Assessment Program) and the TCAP (Transitional Colorado Assessment Program). CSAP was based on the State Board adopted new Colorado Academic Standards. The TCAP was implemented to support school districts as the transition is made to the new academic standards. The content areas assessed by both the CSAP and TCAP are Math, Reading, Writing and Science. In the 2012-13 school year, students in grades 3rd through 10th were assessed on Math, Reading, and Writing. Students in grades 5th, 8th and 10th were assessed in Science.

TCAP reports student proficiency using four scales:

- Advanced
- Proficient
- Partially Proficient
- Unsatisfactory

FIGURE 3: Percentage of Students Scoring Proficient or Higher on 2013 TCAP by Subject and Grade Level⁴



In this section, this report examines the performance results of online schools and compares the results to their non-online peers. This report looks at results from the state’s TCAP assessment and growth results. What follows are detailed findings arising from those analyses.

Achievement Results:

A look at student achievement results, the percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced on the state assessment, showed students at online schools lag behind their peers at non-online schools in all subjects and grade levels. As seen in Figure 3, online schools (as indicated in blue bars) trail their non-online peers (as indicated in gray bars) by as much as 10 to 24 percentage points, depending on the content area and grade level. This performance gap is largest in math; students at non-online schools outperform their online peers by 20 to 22 percentage points, depending on the grade level.

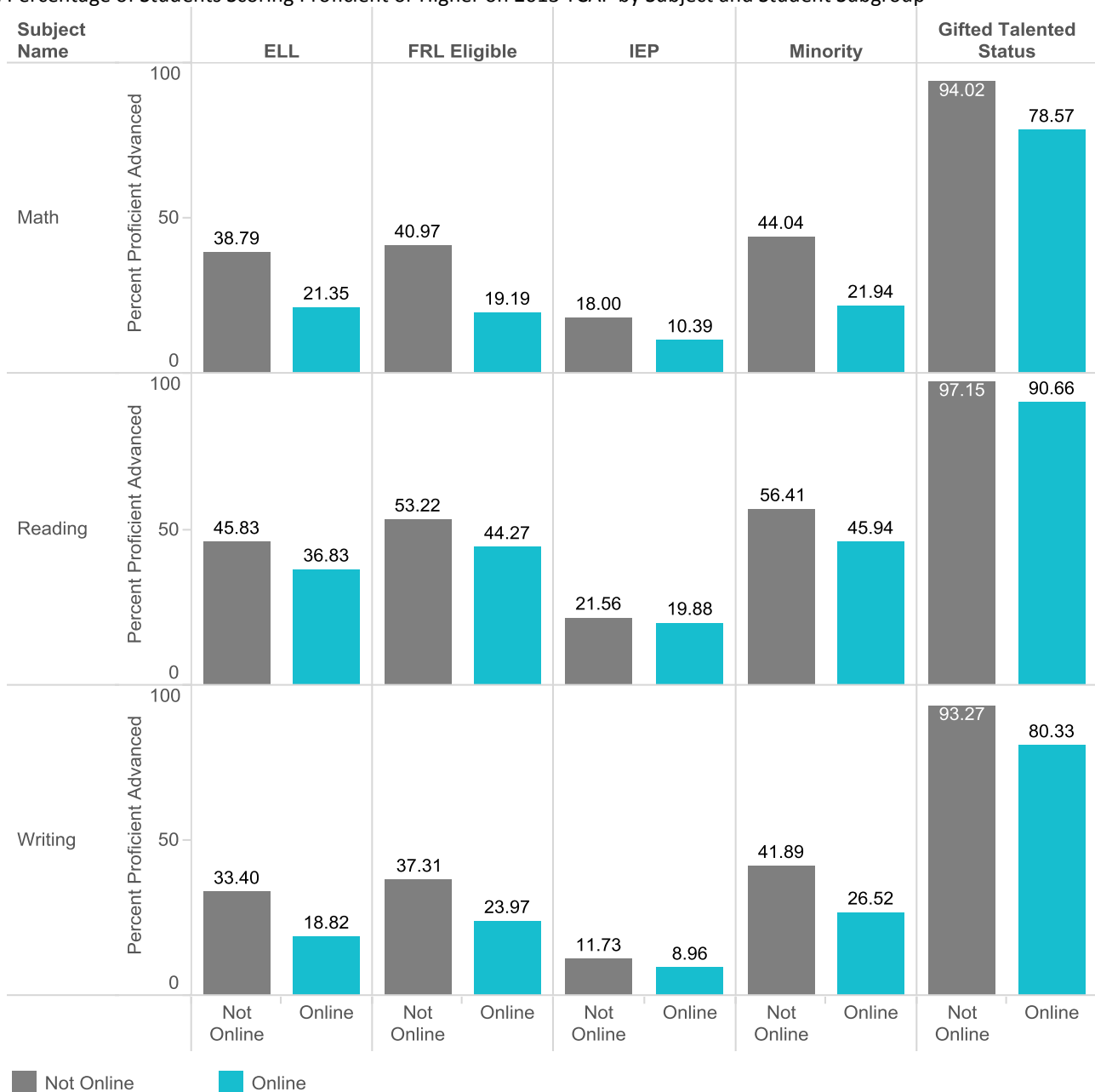
This report also studied how online schools serve the state’s five largest disadvantaged student groups – minority students, English language learners, students who are eligible

⁴ Source: Colorado Department of Education Data Lab, www.schoolview.org; state-level data, no exclusions

for free or reduced price lunch, special education students, and gifted and talented students – and found that online students in every subgroup lag behind their non-online peers in every subject area. As seen in Figure 4, the performance gap between online and non-online schools range anywhere between 5 to 23 percent depending on the subgroup and subject area.

Online schools’ lower performance exacerbates the achievement gaps between non-disadvantaged group and disadvantaged group, painting an even more worrisome picture for the state’s disadvantaged students. For example, the state’s achievement gap between students who are FRL-eligible and students who are FRL-ineligible at non-online schools is approximately 28%; in contrast, using the same analysis, the achievement gap between students who are FRL-eligible at online schools and students who are FRL-ineligible at non-online schools is even wider at 50%.

FIGURE 4: Percentage of Students Scoring Proficient or Higher on 2013 TCAP by Subject and Student Subgroup



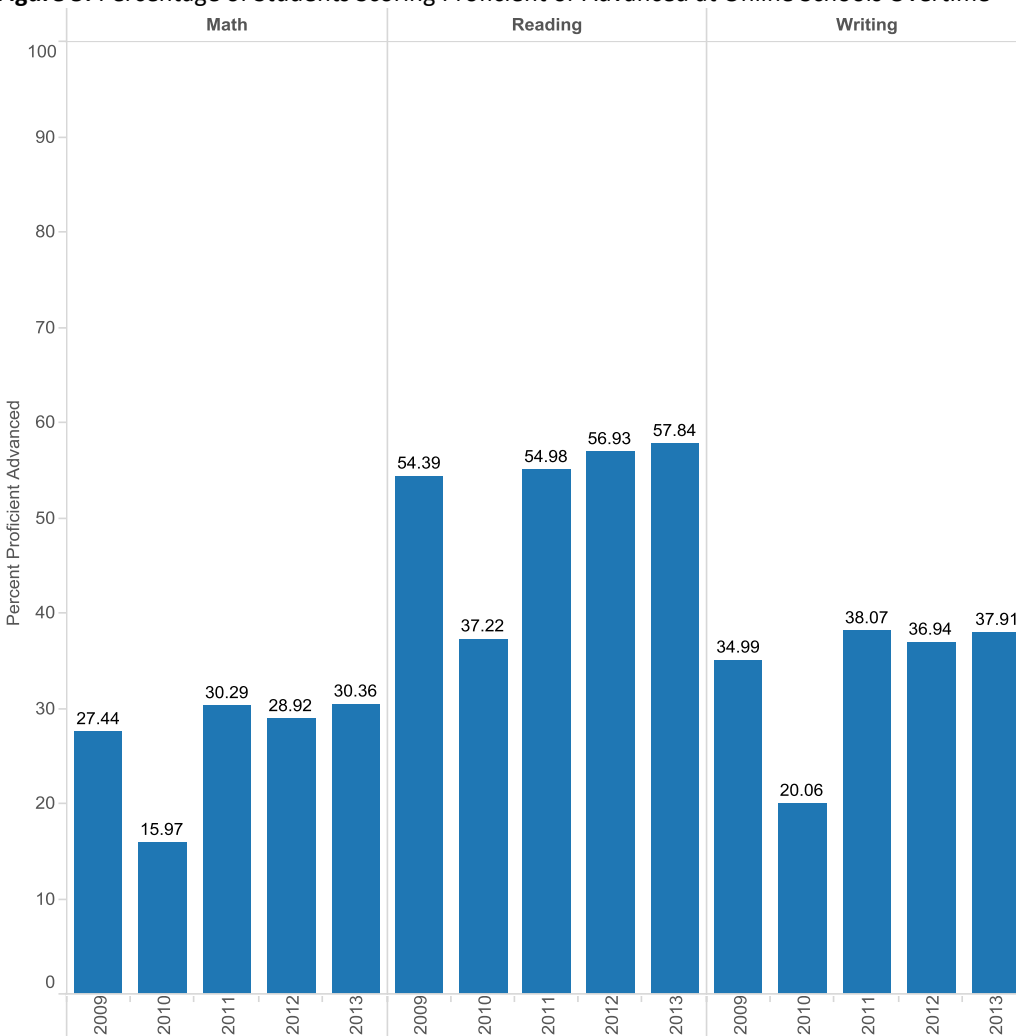
Students attending online schools lagged their peers on almost every academic indicator.

Performance over Time

Considering online schools poorer performance, most troubling is how little they have improved over the last five years. This report found that student achievement, as measured by the percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced on the state assessment, only improved by three percent over the last five years. This is comparable to the rate of improvement of their non-online peers.

As seen in Figure 5, the 3% rate of improvement is the case for all subject areas. At this rate of improvement, online schools will never close the performance gap with their non-online counterparts in a reasonable timeframe.

Figure 5: Percentage of Students Scoring Proficient or Advanced at Online Schools Overtime⁵



⁵ Source: Colorado Department of Education, Data Lab: www.schoolview.org

School-Level Performance

Comparing performance at the school-level provides additional perspective about student performance and identifies schools that struggle to help meet performance targets. This report found considerable variations in performance at the school level between the highest and lowest performing online schools. Figure 6 paints a picture of this performance variation. Each blue dot represents a school; the figure shows the range of performance from the highest to the lowest, the upper quartile, the average performance, and the lower quartile.

While there are fewer online schools, it is notable to see the highest performing online schools do not perform as well as the highest performing non-online schools in every content area. In the case of reading and writing, the overall average performance is less than their non-online counterparts by about 10 to 15 percent, respectively. Math is a performance challenge area for online schools.

Academic Growth

Observed Growth:

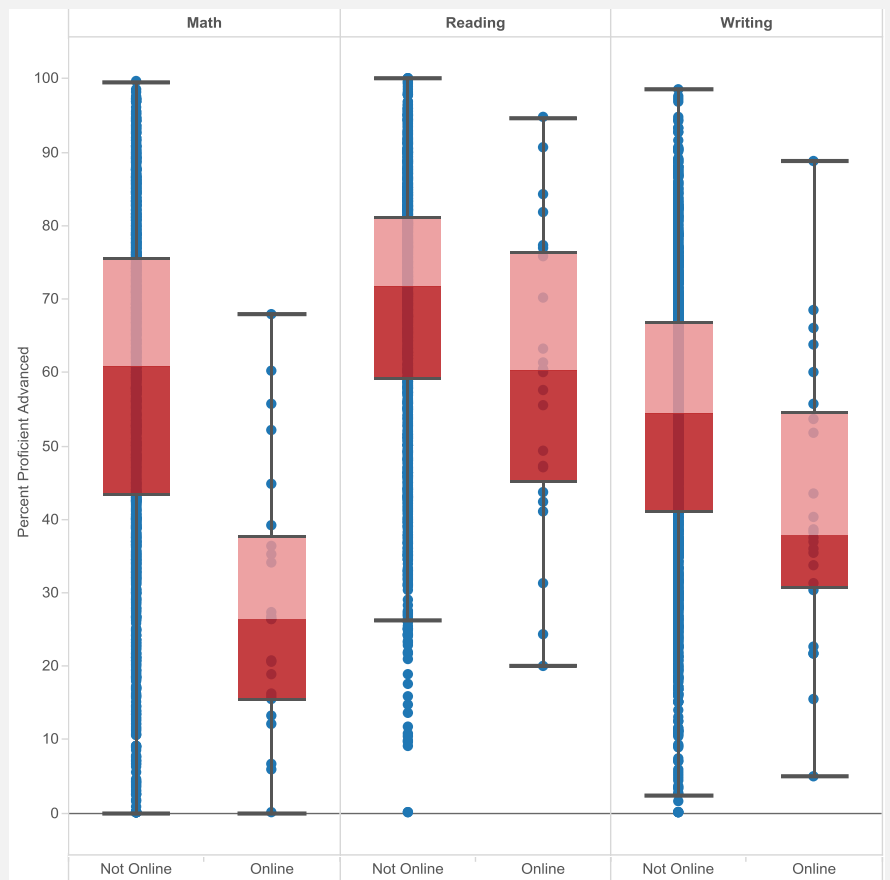
Achievement results provide one perspective on student performance. Growth is another measure that assists in framing the overall performance picture. This report examines growth for online schools and found similar, but slightly more positive performance trends. A look at the 2013 median growth percentile, as

measured by the Colorado Growth Model, revealed that online schools are successfully helping middle and high school students make growth in reading. Growth for these students groups is approaching their non-online counterparts. Online schools, however, struggle at the elementary level. Elementary school students at online school make less growth compared to non-online schools in all subject areas. Finally, math is a performance challenge for online schools; in all subjects and grade levels, students at online schools make less growth compared to their non-online counterparts. Figure 7 summarizes the growth of online schools compared to non-online schools.

Adequate Growth:

While student growth paints a more positive picture for online schools, the bigger question is – are students at online schools making enough growth to reach or maintain proficiency? An analysis of the median adequate growth percentile, a measure that indicates whether the growth is sufficient to reach or maintain proficiency – in reading, writing, and math for 2013 revealed

FIGURE 6: Percentage of Students Scoring Proficient or Advanced Range by School⁶

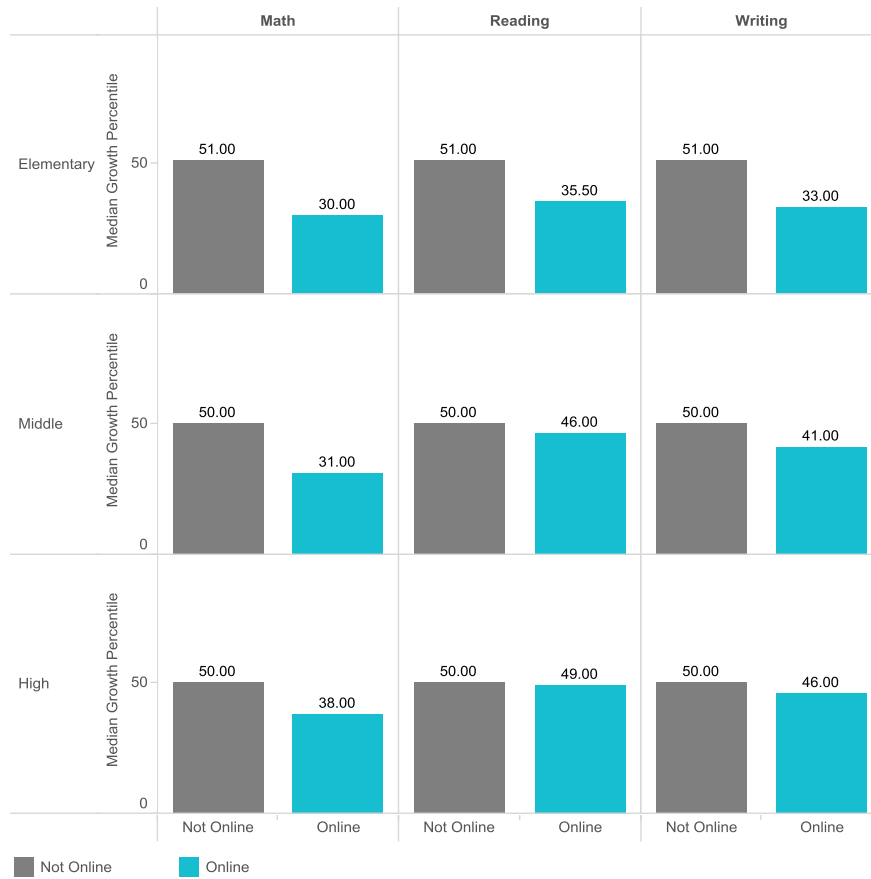


⁶ Source: SchoolView Data Lab: www.schoolview.org

Math – Not Online: n=xx, Online n=:xx
 Reading – Not Online: n=xx, Online: n=xx
 Writing – Not Online: n=xx, Online: n=xx

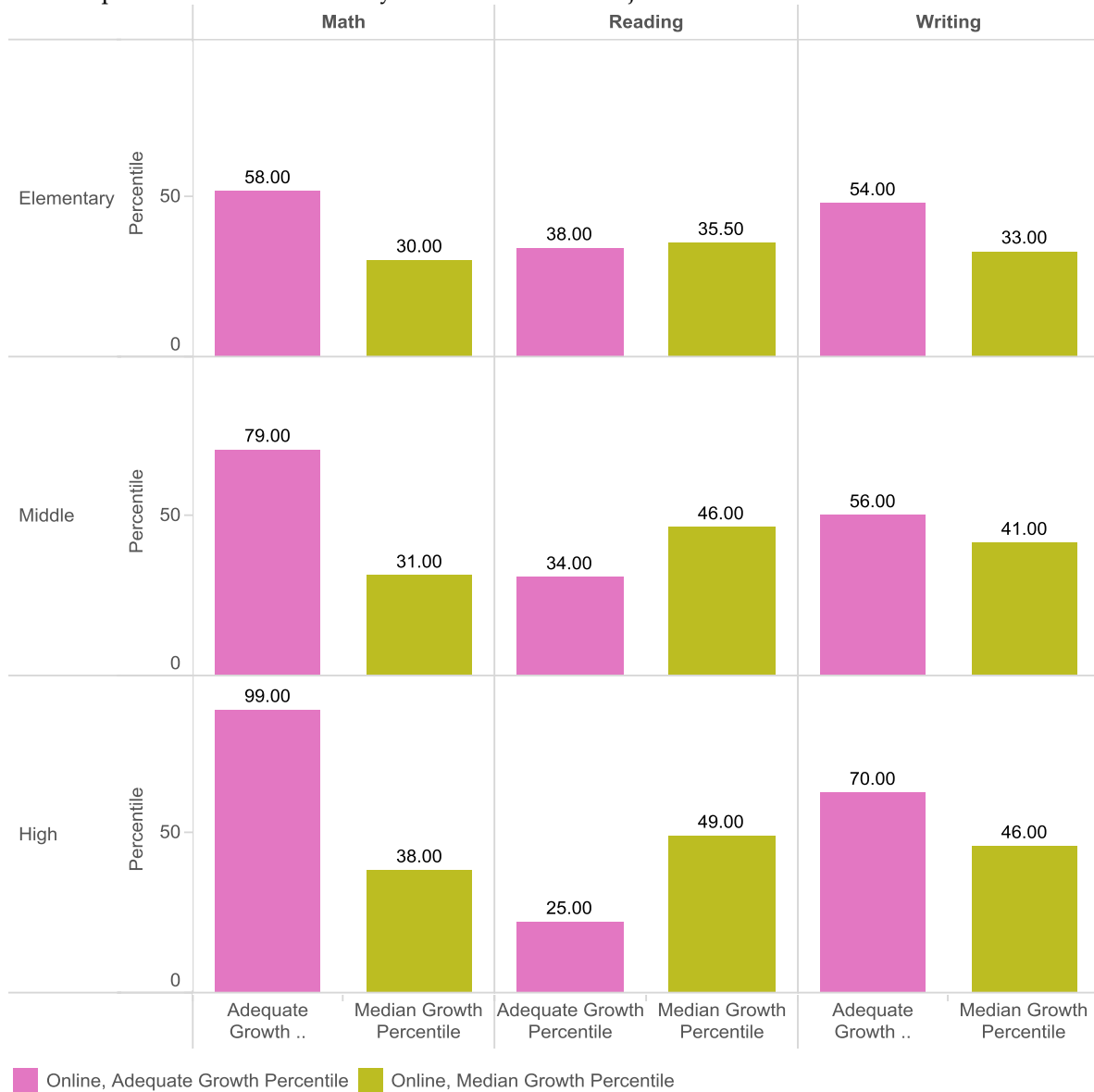
mixed performance. Students at online schools made sufficient growth to reach or maintain proficiency in reading. In writing and math, however, students were not making the growth necessary to reach or maintain proficiency (Figure 8).

Figure 7: Median Growth Percentile by Grade Level and Subject Area⁷



⁷ Source: Colorado Department of Education, Data Lab (www.schoolview.org)

Figure 8: Median Adequate Growth Percentile by Grade Level and Subject for Online Schools



Accountability

Background

As public schools in Colorado, multi-district and single district online schools are held accountable to the same reporting and accountability standards. In the case of a single district online program (not a school), the accountability is aggregated with students in a brick and mortar school with the school district.

The School Performance Framework (SPF) is Colorado’s school accountability report, which reports and rates schools on Colorado’s key performance indicators. It also serves as a tool for schools and districts to identify performance strengths and areas for improvement. In addition, the performance frameworks allow the state to identify schools and districts that are the

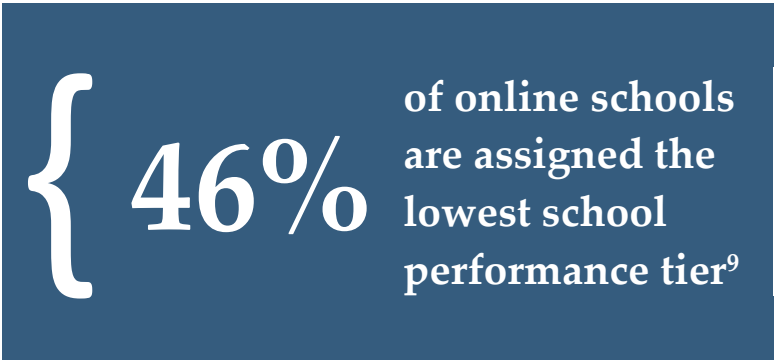
lowest performing in relation to state goals, allowing the state to direct support and intervene appropriately. The performance frameworks also help the state identify its highest performing districts and schools, allowing the state to learn from their practices and reward them.

The performance frameworks measure attainment on four key performance indicators in accordance to The Education Accountability Act of 2009 (SB-09-163). The four performance indicators are academic achievement, academic longitudinal growth, academic growth gaps, and postsecondary and workforce readiness (only applicable for the high school level). Schools are assigned a rating for each of the performance indicators. The ratings indicate the degree to which the school is meeting the state's expectations. The ratings for the performance indicators are "Exceeds", "Meets", "Approaching", or "Does Not Meet". The ratings received on the performance indicators are summed up in an overall evaluation of the school's performance. The evaluation informs the plan type that will be assigned to the school.

There are four types of School Performance Framework plans: Performance, Improvement, Priority Improvement, and Turnaround. A school that has met or exceeded statewide attainment on the performance indicators will be assigned and required to implement a Performance Plan. A school that has been assigned an Improvement plan type is required to adopt and implement an Improvement plan. Schools that are assigned a Priority Improvement or Turnaround plans for five consecutive years, the State Board of Education must direct the local school board to take an action (as specified by the SBE) with the school. Are put on the "accountability clock" and have five years to improve its performance or are subjected to action by the State Board of Education. The possible actions may include removal of accreditation, management of the school by a public or private entity other than the school district management, conversion to a charter school, new management for a current charter school, grant the school innovation status, or school closure or revoking of the school's charter.

Online Schools Current Performance Framework Plan Assignments⁸

For 2013, nearly one half (46%) of online schools were assigned a school performance plan of Priority Improvement or Turnaround. In comparison, only 9% of non-online schools were assigned the lowest two performance plans. An analysis of charter and innovation schools showed that a majority of these schools were assigned a Performance plan - 76% and 64%, respectively. Only 23% (eight) online schools were assigned a Performance plan; in comparison, 71% of non-online schools were assigned a Performance plan. These statistics further demonstrate the poor performance of online schools. See Figure 9 for a breakdown of school plan assignments in 2013.



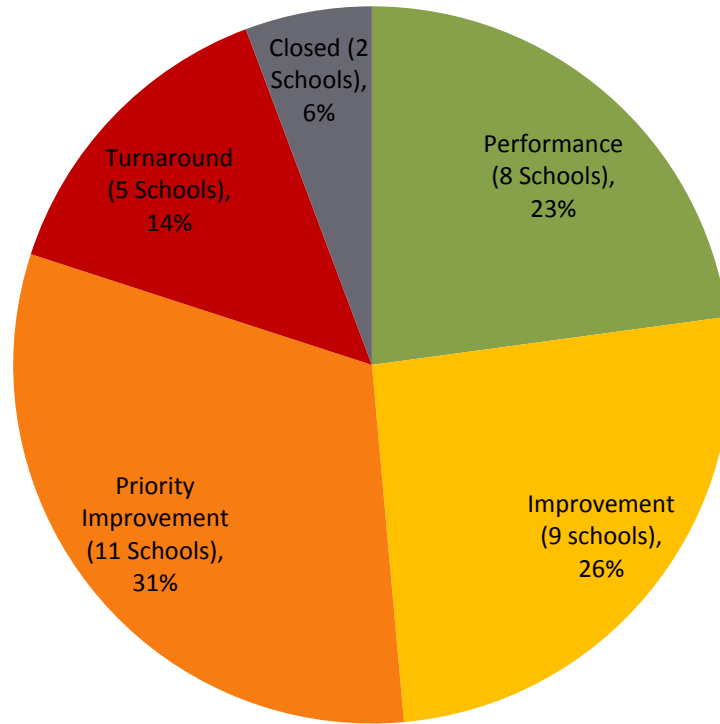
46% of online schools are assigned the lowest school performance tier⁹

⁸ Results do not include Alternative Education Campuses.

⁹ Turnaround and Priority Improvement represent the lowest tier on the school performance framework.

Source: Colorado Department of Education Accountability Statistics, 2013

FIGURE 9: 2013 School Performance Framework Outcomes for Online Schools¹⁰



Alternative Education Campus (AEC) Designation

An Alternative Education Campus or AEC is a public school, district operates or a charter, that receives the designation pursuant to §22-7-604.5, C.R.S. Alternative Education Campuses are defined as schools that have a specialized mission and serve either a special-needs or high-risk population, where more than 95% of students have either an Individualized Education Program or meet the definition of a “high-risk” student.¹¹ Schools must re-apply for AEC status annually to ensure that it meets the 95% threshold.

In relation to the School Performance Framework, a school that is designated as an AEC is given an individualized school performance framework is evaluated on the Academic Achievement, Academic Growth, Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness and Student Engagement performance indicators. The Academic Growth Gaps performance indicator is not included on the AEC School Performance Framework. While AEC’s are accountable for many of the same measures and metrics as traditional schools are, the cut-off points have been adjusted relative to AEC performance. AECs are allowed to submit supplemental measures for the Academic Achievement, Academic Growth, Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness and Student Engagement performance indicators for inclusion on the AEC SPF. These measures may be interim assessments or methods of evaluation of student performance, engagement, or postsecondary and workforce readiness specific to their school’s population.

Of the three online schools that are designated as AEC’s, two were assigned AEC Performance Plans and the other school was assigned an AEC Improvement Plan for 2013. Table 5 shows the performance of these AEC online schools over time. APS online school was given AEC status in 2013. Prior to that, the school performance was determined based on the traditional school performance framework.

¹⁰ Results do not include Alternative Education Campuses

¹¹ Source: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/accountability/stateaccountabilityaecs>

TABLE 5: SPF Outcomes for AEC Online Schools

District Name	School Name	EMH Levels Served	2010 Final Plan Type Category	2011 Final Plan Type Category	2012 Final Plan Type Category	2013 Final Plan Type Category
ADAMS-ARAPAHOE 28J	APS ONLINE SCHOOL	H	Performance Plan	Turnaround Plan	Turnaround Plan	AEC: Performance Plan
FALCON 49	GOAL ACADEMY	H	AEC: Default Improvement	AEC: Improvement Plan	AEC: Priority Improvement Plan	AEC: Improvement Plan
JEFFERSON COUNTY R-1	JEFFCO'S 21ST CENTURY VIRTUAL ACADEMY	MH	AEC: Default Improvement	AEC: Improvement Plan	AEC: Performance Plan	AEC: Performance Plan

Online School Performance Plans over Time

Overall, performance for online schools, as measured by the school performance framework, stayed the same between 2012 and 2013. For online schools with complete SPF records between 2012 and 2013, 45% (14) of online schools saw their plan assignment stay the same, 29% (9 schools) showed an increase, and the remaining 26% (8 schools) showed a decrease. Table 6 below provides a detailed breakdown of school performance plans over time.

TABLE 6: Online SPF Changes between 2012 and 2013¹²

	# of schools	% of schools
Moved up 2 levels	2	6%
Moved up 1 level	7	23%
Stayed the same	14	45%
Moved down 1 level	4	13%
Moved down 2 levels	2	6%
Moved down 3 levels	2	6%
Total	31	

Accountability Clock:

As of SY 2012-13, 16 online schools are on the 5-year accountability clock. Of those 16 schools, over half (nine schools) are entering the third or fourth year of the accountability clock as of July 2014; six out of nine of those online schools are entering their fourth year of the accountability clock. Table 7 provides a breakdown of the 2013 School Performance Framework plan and the year on the accountability clock for online schools as of July 1, 2014.

¹² Results do not include AECs

TABLE 7: Online Schools on the Accountability Clock

District Name	School Name	2013 Final Plan Type Category	Entering Year on PI/TA
BOULDER VALLEY RE 2	BOULDER UNIVERSAL	Priority Improvement Plan	Year 1
PUEBLO COUNTY 70	70 ONLINE	Priority Improvement Plan	Year 1
CANON CITY RE-1	CANON ONLINE ACADEMY	Turnaround Plan	Year 1
CENTER 26 JT	CENTER VIRTUAL ACADEMY	Turnaround Plan	Year 1
DELTA COUNTY 50(J)	DELTA COUNTY VIRTUAL ACADEMY	Turnaround Plan	Year 1
MESA COUNTY VALLEY 51	GRANDE RIVER VIRTUAL ACADEMY	Priority Improvement Plan	Year 2
ST VRAIN VALLEY RE 1J	ST. VRAIN GLOBAL ONLINE ACADEMY	Priority Improvement Plan	Year 2
CHARTER SCHOOL INSTITUTE	COLORADO CALVERT ACADEMY	Priority Improvement Plan	Year 3
CHARTER SCHOOL INSTITUTE	COLORADO PROVOST ACADEMY	Priority Improvement Plan	Year 3
COLORADO SPRINGS 11	ACHIEVE ONLINE	Priority Improvement Plan	Year 3
ADAMS 12 FIVE STAR SCHOOLS	COLORADO VIRTUAL ACADEMY (COVA)	Priority Improvement Plan	Year 4
DOUGLAS COUNTY RE 1	HOPE ON-LINE	Priority Improvement Plan	Year 4
JULESBURG RE-1	INSIGHT SCHOOL OF COLORADO AT JULESBURG	Priority Improvement Plan	Year 4
KARVAL RE-23	KARVAL ONLINE EDUCATION	Priority Improvement Plan	Year 4
DOUGLAS COUNTY RE 1	EDCSD: COLORADO CYBER SCHOOL	Turnaround Plan	Year 4
VILAS RE-5	V.I.L.A.S. ONLINE SCHOOL	Turnaround Plan	Year 4

Financial Reporting

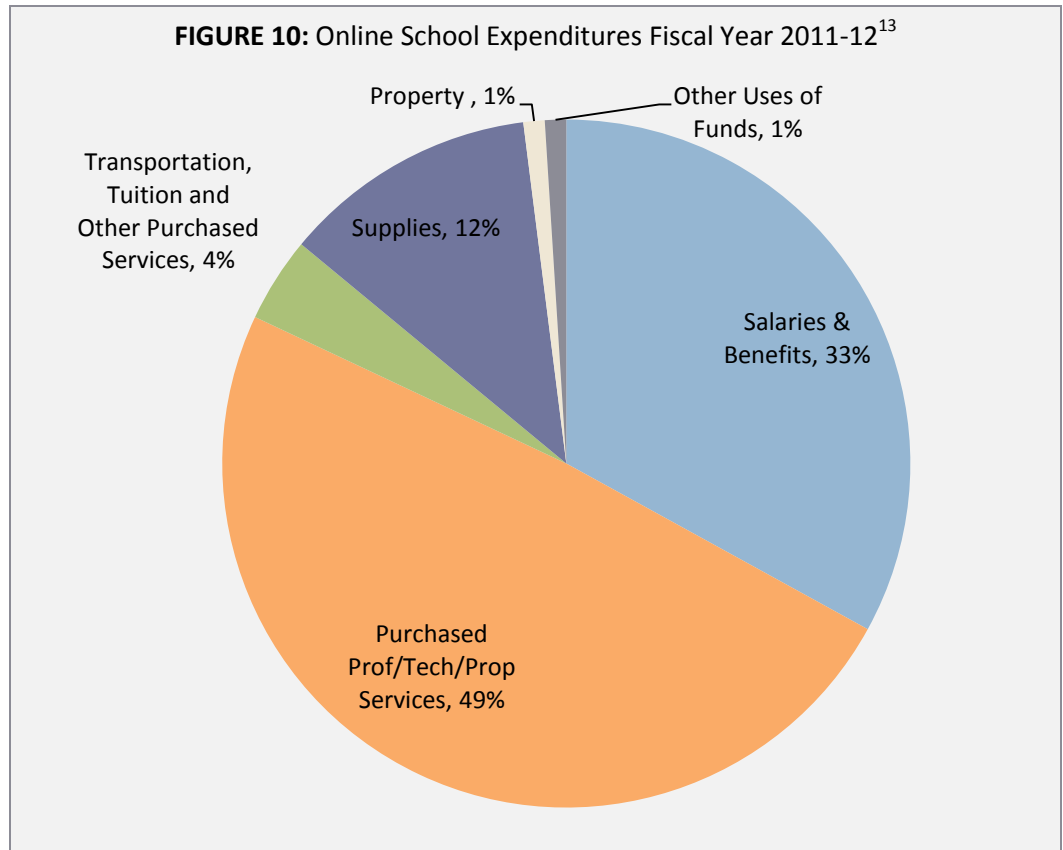
Financial Reporting Requirements for Online Schools and Programs

Pursuant to § 22-30.7-103 (3) (I) C.R.S., the financial expenditures of online schools and programs are submitted to the department on an annual basis. Information concerning sound financial and accounting practices and resources for each online school and program are reported. Online schools and programs report detailed expenditure activities to their districts or BOCES, who in turn will submit the data to the CDE during the annual financial reporting period.

Overview of Expenditures

The Online Expenditure Report consists of two sections; Instructional Program expenditures and Support Program expenditures. Categories of possible expenses for instruction and support programs costs include salaries & benefits, purchased professional services, transportation, supplies, and property expenses. The Online Expenditure Report submitted by districts is available for fiscal years 2011-12 and 2012-13.

In fiscal year 2011-12, a total of \$57,480,545 was reported in expenditures for districts and BOCES operating an online school or online program. Of that amount, the largest percentage, 49%, was reported as utilized for purchased professional services, which includes technical or property services. Purchased professional services comprise expenditures that may include contracted services, curriculum licensing, tuition, or non-staff personnel. The second largest amount of expenditures was reported as being used for salaries and benefits.



Post-secondary and Workforce Readiness

Graduation Rate

Historically, online schools' graduation rates have been much lower than graduation rates statewide and have been so consistently.¹⁴ In the preceding years and currently, online schools' graduation rates fell below the state average for Colorado. While some online schools have seen an increase in their graduation rates between the years of 2011 to 2013, many still fall well below the state average.

¹³ Does not include online charter school expenditures

¹⁴ Heiney, A., Lefly, D., & Anderson, A. (2012). Characteristics of Colorado's Online Students, Colorado Department of Education Research Report, Denver, CO

In 2009-10, a four year formula for calculating the graduation rate was adopted. Students who graduate high school four years after transitioning from eighth grade are counted as “on time to graduate” within the four year formula. The previous formula factored in students that took longer than four years to graduate. For the purpose of this report, the current four year on-time graduation rate calculation is the rate that is being looked at.

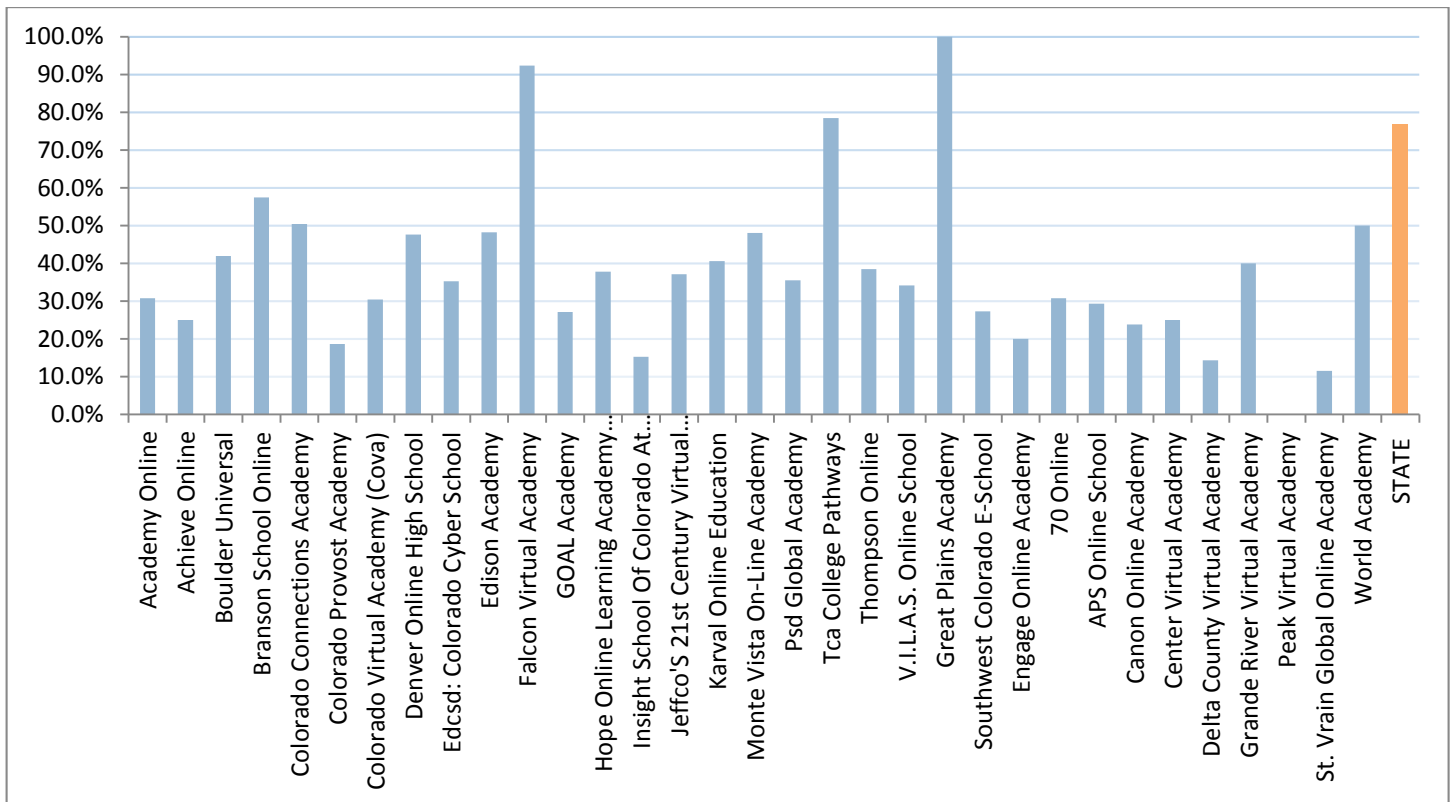
The four year “on time” graduation rate is calculated by the number of students receiving a regular diploma within four years of transitioning from 8th grade divided by the number of students transitioning from 8th grade at the end of the school year, plus the number of transfers in minus the number of verified transfers out. ⁱⁱ

To assist in tracking, students are assigned an Anticipated Year of Graduation from the time that they successfully complete 8th grade.



Graduation rates among online schools have occurred at a level well below the state graduation rate. In 2011, no online school had a graduation rate that was equivalent to the state. One online school exceeded the state graduation rate in 2012. Several online schools saw increases in graduation rates in 2012, however many online schools saw decreases in graduation rates as well. Graduation rates for the 2013 year for online schools increased, with 22 online schools having an increase in graduation rate. Despite the increases, only three online schools had graduation rates that met or exceeded the state graduation rate.

FIGURE 11: 2013 Online School Graduation Rate vs. State



Dropout Rate

The dropout rate for Colorado is calculated on an annual basis. The dropout rate reflects the percentage of students that are enrolled in grades 7-12 who leave school during the school year. If the student does not subsequently attend another school or education program, he or she will be considered in the dropout rate. The rate is calculated by dividing the number of dropouts by the number of students who were enrolled at any time during the year.

The majority of online schools, both multi-district and single district, have higher dropout rates than the state dropout rate. Although some online schools are seeing slight decreases in dropout rates, many are higher than the state average.

Currently, there are eight multi-district online schools that have dropout rates that are below the state dropout rate. Two multi-district online schools had a 0% dropout rate for the 2013 year. One multi-district online school has consistently had a dropout rate of 0% over the last three years.

Single district online schools also have dropout rates that are overall higher than the state. Five single district online schools have had a decrease in dropout rates from 2012 to 2013, with one school having a 0% dropout rate in 2013. Four single district online schools increased the dropout rate from 2012 to 2013.

TABLE 8: Online School Dropout Rate, Including State Rate

ONLINE SCHOOL	2011 DROPOUT RATE	2012 DROPOUT RATE	2013 DROPOUT RATE
ACADEMY ONLINE HIGH SCHOOL	3.50%	0%	8.00%
ACHIEVEK12	2%	7.20%	8.70%
BOULDER UNIVERSAL	2%	1.90%	2.40%
BRANSON SCHOOL ONLINE	9.30%	8.10%	2.40%
COLORADO CALVERT ACADEMY*	0%	1.90%	2.00%
COLORADO CONNECTIONS ACADEMY	24.60%	4%	5.80%
COLORADO PROVOST ACADEMY	23.10%	15.60%	13.70%
COLORADO VIRTUAL ACADEMY (COVA)	9%	9.20%	9.00%
DENVER ONLINE HIGH SCHOOL	12.90%	2.90%	7.10%
EDCSD: COLORADO CYBER SCHOOL	4.90%	3%	1.10%
EDISON ACADEMY	4.50%	1%	0.00%
ENGAGE ONLINE ACADEMY	n/a	11.10%	10.60%
FALCON VIRTUAL ACADEMY	3.20%	0%	0.90%
GOAL ACADEMY	23.10%	12.90%	22.10%
GREAT PLAINS ACADEMY	n/a	n/a	0.00%
HOPE ON-LINE	5.50%	5.60%	8.20%
INSIGHT SCHOOL OF COLORADO	38.70%	27.40%	29.10%
JEFFCO'S 21ST CENTURY VIRTUAL ACADEMY	8.90%	7.10%	4.80%
KARVAL ONLINE EDUCATION	8.80%	6.40%	8.60%
MONTE VISTA ON-LINE ACADEMY	8.60%	5.70%	8.10%
PSD ONLINE ACADEMY	0.70%	3.40%	5.30%
SOUTHWEST COLORADO E-SCHOOL	4.60%	6%	11.10%
TCA COLLEGE PATHWAYS	0%	0%	0.00%
THOMPSON ONLINE	5.50%	4.20%	6.50%
V.I.L.A.S. ONLINE SCHOOL	10.80%	12.80%	18.20%
APS ONLINE SCHOOL	10.70%	13.50%	24.40%
70 ONLINE	n/a	7.70%	15.10%
CANON ONLINE ACADEMY	n/a	11.40%	14.20%
CENTER VIRTUAL ACADEMY	n/a	16.70%	0.00%
DELTA COUNTY VIRTUAL ACADEMY	n/a	22.2	15.00%
GRANDE RIVER VIRTUAL ACADEMY	n/a	8.2	5.10%
PEAK VIRTUAL ACADEMY	n/a	6.3	3.50%
ST. VRAIN GLOBAL ONLINE ACADEMY	n/a	7.8	12.90%
WORLD ACADEMY	n/a	27.8	11.80%
STATE	3%	2.90%	2.50%

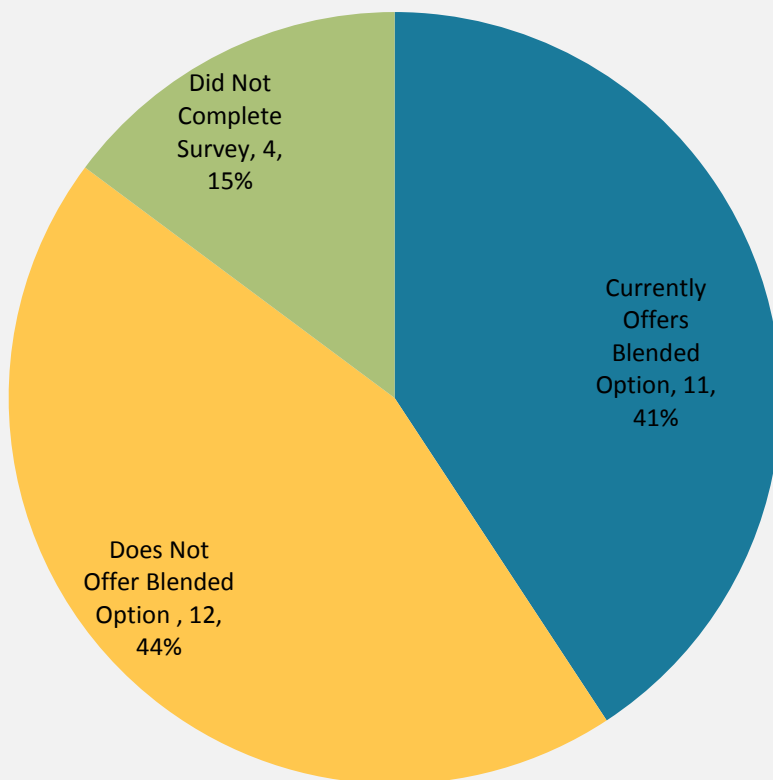
Upcoming Trends: Blended Learning

Blended Learning Overview

Many online schools in Colorado are currently operating with or are planning to implement some form of blended learning. Horn and Staker, define blended learning as a formal education program in which a student learns at least in part through online delivery of content and instruction with some element of student control over time, place, path, and/or pace and at least in part at a supervised brick-and-mortar location away from home.¹⁵

Although there are presently a number of different models identified in relation to blended learning, the most common model found among multi-district online schools is the enhanced virtual model. In the enhanced virtual model students access some course content online and remotely as well as attend a physical location. Early models of the enhanced virtual model of blended learning were pioneered by a limited number of schools. Denver Online High School, GOAL Academy, Hope Online Learning Academy Co-op, and TCA College Pathways have all included a face-to face option for their students since the beginning of operations.

FIGURE 11: Multi-district Online Schools with Blended Learning Option¹⁶



Denver Online High School has been offering blended options since 2003. Denver Online High School currently provides opportunities for students at the Career Education Center in addition to using learning labs for one-on-one tutoring and instruction for various class meetings. The face to face component at Denver Online High School is optional depending on student needs. The ability for students to build relationships with teachers, receiving assistance needed to understand course content and the opportunity to have other learning opportunities opened to them are some of the positive impacts of including blended learning options.

TCA College Pathways, a multi-district online charter school, in its 5th year of operation has always included the blended structure as a requirement for its students. At TCA College Pathways, students attend on-campus classes two hours per week with the remaining course work accessed remotely from home. Students also have the option of being concurrently enrolled in which they can gain college credit while still in high school. One of the benefits to this approach

¹⁵ <http://www.christenseninstitute.org/blended-learning/>

¹⁶ Based on Blended Learning Survey by CDE, 2014

is that students are able to collaborate with teachers and other students in person, while still being able to work at their own pace from home. The other reported benefits of utilizing blended learning by TCA College Pathways are that students are showing more responsibility for their personal work and are achieving college readiness.

GOAL (Guided Online Learning Academy) is a multi-district online school that serves high risk youth. From the beginning of its operations, students have the option of face to face meetings with teachers and mentors. Teachers and mentors are located in the geographic locations in which the students reside. Teachers and mentors meet with students in drop-in centers located throughout the state or in various public locations. The services provided to students in the face to face component at GOAL Academy, are tutoring, wrap around services, ELL, ESS and assessment services. The reported benefits of offering a face to face option for student at GOAL Academy include being able to offer high risk youth social emotional counseling and support services.

The Hope Online Learning Academy Co-op offers yet another blended alternative. HOPE Online Learning Academy Co-op began operations in 2005 and since that time blended learning has been part of HOPE's model. Students access the online curriculum at the HOPE Learning Center under the supervision of a teacher or mentor. Students are required to attend Monday through Friday, on a schedule that mirrors traditional brick and mortar schools. The blended model used by HOPE Online Learning Academy Co-op has created a supportive environment for at-risk youth in which they can succeed in online learning. Student learning can be personalized to meet student needs and accommodate learning styles. Another added benefit reported is that the community-based learning centers provide support with parent engagement. Parents are able to be as involved as those who have students in a traditional virtual school. In traditional virtual schools, parents are often the learning coach or guide and have the opportunity to be very involved in the student's education. With HOPE Online Learning Academy Co-op, parents are able to be involved because the learning centers are located within the communities that the students reside.

Current Blended Learning Trends in Multi-district Online Schools

Currently, many fully-virtual multi-district online schools have added or are planning to add a face to face component to their school. Based on a survey of multi-district online schools on blended learning practices by CDE; of the 23 multi-district online schools that completed the survey, 11 schools stated that they currently offer a blended learning option. Of the 12 multi-district online schools that do not currently offer a blended learning option 6 indicated that they are planning to implement a blended face to face option in the future.

A variety of blended learning opportunities were reported by the 11 multi-district schools that currently offer them such as tutoring services to students in need of extra assistance, elective courses in a face to face format, and the opportunity to earn college credit with concurrent enrollment offerings at local community colleges. Although offerings vary among multi-district online schools, there were similarities in responses in regard to the reasons for choosing to add a face to face option.

Schools indicated that they are moving to included blended learning for a number of reasons:

- it contributes to the building of school community and student-teacher relationships
- it makes it easier to ensure adequate intervention
- schools believe it does or will increase student achievement
- student and family requests

PSD Global Academy and Falcon Virtual Academy are both examples of online schools that have adapted from a fully virtual online school to one that includes blended options. Both schools have observed an increase in student achievement for the students that participate in the blended option.

PSD Global Academy began operations with a fully virtual model in 2009. The decision to offer a face to face component to students began in the 2010-11 school year. For the next three years, the blended option was offered and it was found that the students engaging in the blended option were achieving between four to seven times higher than those in the fully online counterpart. Based on the success of the students participating in the blended option, there are plans to make the blended component a requirement for the 2014-15 school year.

Falcon Virtual Academy has offered a face to face option for students for the past three years. Elective courses are offered on campus for students. The students are not mandated to participate, but are highly encouraged. The blended option not only helps students build connections with their school, but those students who participate in the blended option also have seen an increase in scores and achievement. Based on 2012-13 data, students who participate in the blended component outperform full virtual students by an average of 30%.

As blended learning begins to expand among fully virtual multi-district schools, there are barriers that hinder progress. The survey from schools that have implemented blended learning indicated that the most commonly reported barriers were lack of space & resources, along with community perceptions. In schools that currently offer a blended component and among the online schools that are planning to add a blended component in the future, financial resources were cited as the main barrier to including a blended component in their schools. More specifically, current funding models for blended students as well as lack of existing financial resources were named as significant barriers.

Appendix A: CDE Blended Learning Survey

Blended Learning Survey Questions

For the following questions, please refer to the definition below:

Blended learning is a formal education program in which a student learns at least in part through online delivery of content and instruction with some element of student control over time, place, path, and/or pace and at least in part at a supervised brick-and-mortar location away from home. (Horn and Staker, 2012).

1. Does your school offer a blended learning option as described in the definition above?
2. If your school does not currently offer a blended learning option, are there plans to do so at a later time?
3. What is the intended timeframe to add a blended option to your online school?
4. Please provide a brief description of the blended option that your online school provides.
5. Do the students that utilize the blended option go to a learning center, drop-in center or other facility?
6. Is the blended option required or optional?
7. How long has the blended option been available to students at your school?
8. What courses are offered in the blended format?
9. What factors influenced the decision to offer a blended option?
10. How has the blended learning option positively impacted student achievement in your school?
11. What are some of the challenges encountered with the offering of a blended option within the online school?
12. Please provide the name of the online school that you are responding for.
13. Name and title of person completing survey

Additional Resources:

For school level data regarding performance and achievement, visit the SchoolView website:

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/schoolview>

For individual online school general information, visit the Blended and Online Learning website:

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/onlinelearning/schools>