

Online Charter Schools — Weakening North Carolina's Education System

Online charter schools have expanded rapidly in recent years **in spite of increasing evidence that far too often these schools have failed to adequately educate children**, particularly in comparison to children attending traditional public schools. Companies that create online charter schools have experienced rapid revenue growth over the past five years at the same time that **funding for traditional public schools has stagnated and declined**. Online charter schools are largely unaccountable for the substandard results they have delivered and the way that they spend an increasingly large share of public funds.

ONLINE CHARTER SCHOOLS:

Schools making AYP* —



27.4%

Graduation rate (K12 inc.) —



49.1%

TRADITIONAL PUBLIC SCHOOLS:

Schools making AYP* —



52%

Graduation rate (in states where K12 inc. operates) —

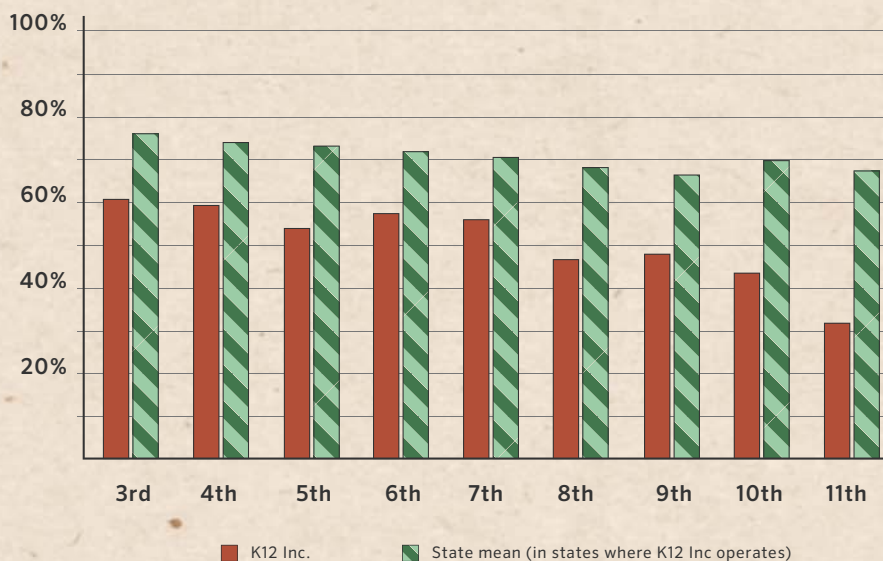


79.4%

*Adequate Yearly Progress, a measurement of academic performance based on results of standardized tests, defined by the United States federal No Child Left Behind Act. K12 Inc is a large, publicly traded company and a private education management organization.

Evaluations of online charter schools demonstrate that **online charter school students trail their public school counterparts by a wide margin** on performance on state proficiency scores, graduation rates and the learning gains that they make in school.

Proportion of students meeting state standards in math by grade, 2010-2011

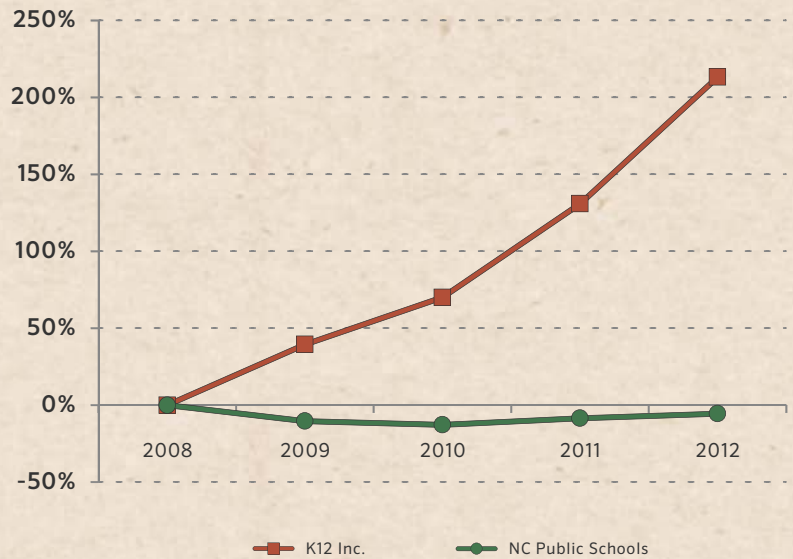


“In every subgroup with significant effects, **cyber charter performance is lower** than **the brick and mortar performance**”

— Stanford University CREDO Study on Charter School Performance in Pennsylvania

Revenue trends as a percentage change since 2008

For-profit online charter schools rely on public funding that otherwise would go to traditional public schools. In recent years, companies like K12 Inc. have received an increasing share of public funds. Public schools, particularly in North Carolina, have seen a corresponding decrease in public funding over the same period.



“The early development of children requires lots of interaction with other children for purposes of socialization, developing collaboration and teamwork, and self-definition.”

— Irving Hamer Jr., Deputy Superintendent, Memphis City Schools

Accountability and regulations:

Online charter schools are governed by private for-profit companies rather than publicly elected boards and are exempt from most of the accountability measures that apply to traditional public schools.

ONLINE CHARTER SCHOOLS:

- ▶ Student-teacher ratio: 50 to 1
- ▶ 50% of Middle and High School teachers and 25% of Elementary School teachers can be unlicensed
- ▶ No standard curriculum requirement
- ▶ No restrictions or accountability on how public dollars are spent
- ▶ School run by private board that is unaccountable to the public

TRADITIONAL PUBLIC SCHOOLS:

- ▶ Student-teacher ratio: 26 to 1
- ▶ 100% of teachers must be licensed
- ▶ Curriculum follows State Standard Course of Study and Common Core
- ▶ Expenditures are limited by North Carolina law and the Local Government Commission
- ▶ Schools run by elected boards who must live in the local school district

Sources:

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- K12 Annual Report, 2012.
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- North Carolina’s Charter Law: Creating Two Public Education Systems, North Carolina School Boards Association: August 2012.

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