

2X2 Survey Responses

Surveys were sent, by CDE, to the four top performing online schools and the four bottom performing online schools in Colorado. Four responses were received: two top performers and two bottom performers.

Responses to all questions are listed in alphabetical order by theme.

What has been essential to your success?

Top Performing

Autonomy

Autonomy in working within the parameters of running a school in a site-based district.

Flexibility

Flexibility: we need to make decisions that fit our school culture and school population, as much as possible.

Parity across Modality

Being treated like a school regardless of delivery modality.

Staff

The use of online mentors for support for teachers, so they only focus on curriculum and face-to-face opportunities for students within our building.

Bottom Performing

Staff

Hiring the right staff is the most critical piece to running any successful school but I believe it to be even more important with online schools, specifically hiring online teachers.

Having dedicated and talented teachers

Intake Procedures

Implementing the proper in-take (orientation) process has been key when enrolling students/parents in our online school. The 2 hour required orientation clearly explains expectations/rules for both the student and parent. We have found out thru trial and error that online school actually takes a higher level of commitment from both the student and parent, which is why it needs to be clearly explained at start. We have found that a valuable part of orientation is providing hands on tutorials for parents in regards to following their students' attendance and progress.

Student-Teacher Interaction

Reaching out to students on a consistent basis from our online teachers (face to face, text, web cam, phone, etc.) is a critical piece to ensuring student engagement which leads to academic success. Our teachers are required to engage in weekly check-ins with their homeroom students and families. We also have a student lounge in building that students can come in (everyday if they choose) to have direct access with their teachers. The face to face connections allow students to build relationships with staff and receive one-on-one tutoring as necessary.

Student Testing Information

The fact that all kids were tested last year.

What are your barriers to success?

Top Performing

Competition

The lack of massive marketing budgets to compete with EMO's.

Cost

High costs of curriculum and internal IT support to manage LMS.

Drop In Centers

"Drop in" locations located within our district boundaries without agreement or discussion despite our district having exclusive chartering authority.

Reporting/Documentation Requirements

Extremely burdensome reporting and documentation for October Count and other compliance requirements and different sets of rules, procedures, etc. for online schools vs in-building schools (online students are assumed to be absent unless proven to be present where in-building students are assumed to be present unless marked absent). The time it takes the people in our organization, down to the teacher level, to complete October Count and other compliance based requirements takes away from our ability to effectively serve students.

Staffing

Staffing.

Student Mismatch

We believe that we have a program that could benefit a large number of students, but many of the students that seek out our program are doing it out of desperation or as a last resort. We continue to seek solutions to this problem.

Student Supports

Social Emotional resources in the area are very minimal.

Transitioning Home School Families

Previously homeschooled families who do not want accountability, but are unable to continue to their homeschooling efforts.

Bottom Performing

Curriculum Development

Finding time to build curriculum the right way: even with dedicated teachers this is difficult.

Lack of Parental Involvement

Parent involvement and support continues to be a struggle as well. Contrary to popular belief, the majority of our families are not necessarily technologically savvy, but looking to online alternatives because their students haven't been successful in traditional schools.

Student Mobility

Very high mobility rates are perhaps the biggest barrier. Keeping the same students from year to year is always very challenging. A good number of online students see it as a transition period and eventually end up back in brick and mortar schools.

What support or accountability from your authorizer has positively changed practice in your school?

Top Performing

Parity across Modality

We receive support for accreditation, site planning, UIP production, and administrative support and supervision as any other school does.

We are treated like any other school in our district and this provides support and accountability. We have access to district leadership for decision making, problem-solving, and other issues.

We have the same accountability standards as our brick and mortar schools.

Bottom Performing

AECs

The support provided by our district in applying for and becoming an Alternative Education Campus has been outstanding.

Added Staff

The support given has been to add staff over the past 3 years to meet the increase in student enrollment.

Are the Authorizer

We are the authorizer, but, we've tried to support our teachers when students issues come up or they need supporting materials.

Curriculum

The department of curriculum has also become better at providing additional/supplemental resources to add to the existing online curriculum.)

List one to three things that if changed right now would dramatically increase your potential for success?

Top Performing

Broadband

Expansion of broad band internet access to families.

Disparate Requirements due to Modality

Removal of the designation and associated inequitable practices associated with delivery model (online, blended, etc.).

Multi-district School Authorization

Removal of requirements to be authorized as a multi-district school –In-building schools who choice as many or more kids from outside our district boundaries don't have to undergo "authorization" for any purpose.

Reduction in State Assessments

Drastic reduction in State Assessments

Staffing

Staffing ratio equivalent to tradition brick and mortar.

State Interference

Removal of state interference with how a district chooses to operate a school within its own operations.

Bottom Performing

Professional Community

Monthly meetings with all Colorado online schools to discuss best practices which would include professional development for online teachers.

Reduced Reporting Requirements

Less stringent reporting measures required from CDE during the 10 day count window.

Decreased Mobility Rates

Decrease in student mobility rates.

Standardized Curriculum

The ability to have a statewide curriculum bank of online resources for all districts to draw from.

If we had an up-to-date curriculum with "ready to use" lesson plans.

Is there anything your authorizer does differently with your school, in terms of oversight or support, as compared to brick and mortar schools?

Top Performing

Nothing

No, we're treated the same as any other school in our district. Delivery modality doesn't and shouldn't matter.

Bottom Performing

Curriculum Roll-Out

The manner in which curriculums are rolled out to students seems to be completely different from the brick and mortar schools.

We are held to the same standards and requirements as the brick and mortar schools within our district.

If you have changed authorizers, how did that impact your ability to ensure student performance?

No responses were provided by survey respondents.