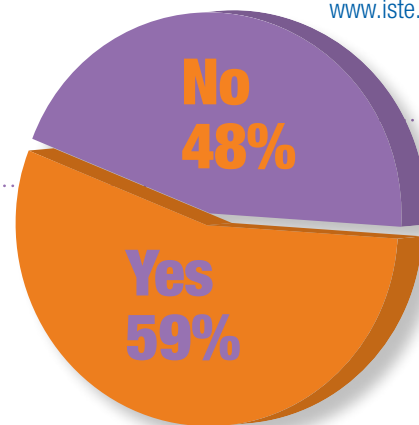


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POLL RESULTS

Should Public Schools Be Required to Offer Online K–12 Education?

Although most agree there are merits to both face-to-face and online education, respondents are split over whether a mandate is warranted.

Blend the New with the Old

It's a disservice to us all to suppose that having no form of online education available to every student is acceptable. You can hide under a rock, but don't take your students with you. Blend change with traditional techniques and you will continue to give your students a beautiful, engaging, and worthwhile education that prepares them for the world. Can you do it with chalk? Of course, but add a dash of Google now and then!

*Matt Pearson
Marin Country Day School
Corte Madera, California*

Classrooms for Social Skills

Online education works for professional development or graduate degrees, but I think in K–12, students need to learn from a teacher in a classroom. The classroom provides not only an educational environment but a social one as well, which is important in the formative years.

*Jacqueline Jo Masloff
Millennium Training Institute
Woburn, Massachusetts*

Don't Fight the Future

With the invention of the printing press and the availability of textbooks, many teachers were wary. They felt if students had textbooks, they would no longer need teachers. Educators must be willing to embrace these new technology resources if America's students are going to be competitive in a global community.

*Peggy Collum
Cleburn County Board of Education
Heflin, Alabama*

Go Global

Students need the physical presence of a caring teacher. But taking one or some online courses would provide increased subject choices for students, provide them with 21st-century skills, and enhance cultural and global understanding.

*Linda Rogde
Seoul Foreign School
Seoul, South Korea*

Mandates Dilute Quality

Any policy mandate ends up watering down the quality, regardless of the intention. Serious professional development has to be given to the teachers, the technology support must be in place, and administration must support the implementation fully. Mandating that all public schools offer online courses would be a poor policy decision that would end up hurting students more than helping.

*Katie Logan
Fort Washakie Charter High School/
Wyoming e-Academy of Virtual Education
Comment on ISTE.org poll*

Survival of the Fittest

Making it mandatory for public schools to have online classes is akin to requiring everyone to practice good health habits: We know it should be done, but it's just not practical with humans. The healthy districts will adopt change that includes online education, virtual classrooms without walls, etc.; the rest will fail to meet society's needs.

*Robert Richardson
Kissimee Charter Middle School
Kissimee, Florida*

Nationalize Online Schooling

In Turkey we reach 15 million K–12 students, poor or rich, in small villages or on Fifth Avenue, for free thanks to Turk Telekom sponsoring this. The USA has less than 1 million online students. You should have a national online curriculum. The algebra in San Francisco is the same as the algebra in New York.

*Muvaffak Gozaydin
Online Education Corp.
Turkey*

LETTERS

Don't Disrupt Class

I read Anita McAnear's piece about online learning in the Feb. 2009 *L&L*. As lead author of a book about online learning (*The Virtual High School*, published in 2003 by Teachers College Press), I have documented the strengths and weaknesses of online learning. I believe that *Disrupting Class* is a misleading, poorly researched book, and I wrote a review of the book. One of the coauthors of *Disrupting Class* notes that the review is thoughtful, and others have also made favorable comments, including the heads of two large online high schools. The review is at www.concord.org/publications/detail/2008_DisruptingClass_WhitePaper.pdf.

*Andy Zucker
Senior Research Scientist
The Concord Consortium*