

PERFORMANCE AUDIT

Work in progress: Audit description

K-12 Education During and After the Pandemic

Opportunities to learn from changes made in K-12 educational methods

During the multiple waves of COVID-19 pandemic infections, schools were closed to in-person instruction. Teachers and students suddenly needed to teach and learn in new ways. Circumstances forced educators to reconsider their methods of teaching and turn to alternatives using new tools and techniques to reach their students.

Alternative methods to traditional in-classroom teaching have been available for many years. However, certain techniques – including online courses, teaching over internet platforms, and Alternative Learning Experience (ALE) classes – expanded greatly during the pandemic. Even as the emergency restrictions of the pandemic have been reduced or eliminated, these and other techniques have remained in place across Washington. In addition, those schools that had not previously offered students such options may be considering doing so now.

Some examples of non-traditional teaching methods used during and after the pandemic



'Virtual' instruction. Classes taught live, for two-way interactive communication, by a teacher over an internet platform. Students are almost always outside a regular school building.



Online learning. Instruction takes place through specifically designed online course materials. More than half the course content is computer-based interaction, with oversight from a teacher.



Remote learning. Instructional materials provided by the school, not as an online course. Students learn outside a traditional classroom setting, with no minimum in-person teaching requirement.

Improving the way Washington schools offer non-traditional learning opportunities could benefit students who prefer alternative learning styles. Having such tools and techniques in place might also better prepare the state for future emergency school closures.

Preliminary scope and objectives

This performance audit will research and report on innovative learning practices put in place by schools in the 2020-21, 2021-22 and 2022-2023 school years. It will also consider how these practices can be expanded or adopted by other schools. The audit will seek to answer the following questions:

- What innovative practices have schools put in place to teach outside a traditional classroom environment?
- How might schools incorporate these new modes of learning?



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