



The Nevada Policy Research Institute

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Study: Virtual schooling a win-win for Nevada

LAS VEGAS — A more robust virtual-schooling program would produce dramatic cost-savings for Nevada’s state and county governments while modernizing the Silver State’s education system and creating opportunities for significant improvement in student performance, a new study by an analyst with the Nevada Policy Research Institute finds.

The study, titled “Bit by Bit: Virtual Schools Can Transform Nevada Public Education” and authored by NPRI education policy analyst Patrick R. Gibbons, finds that, “Virtual education offers the Silver State the remarkable possibility of reducing labor, capital, debt and transportation costs — while providing quality, personalized instruction for Nevada students.”

“This study finds that virtual schooling is just as effective as, and in some cases more effective than, traditional, brick-and-mortar education when it comes to student learning,” said Gibbons, who noted that by the end of the decade, half of all K-12 courses in the United States will be taught online. “Add in the fact that virtual schools are less expensive to operate than traditional public schools, and it becomes clear that Nevada has much to gain by embracing this innovative approach to educating students.”

The study also finds that virtual schools are particularly ideal options for mobile students, credit-deficient students, students wishing to get ahead or graduate early, homeschooled students, rural students or students who find traditional public schools to be distracting or intimidating.

More than 6,000 students statewide currently attend virtual schools full-time, including at least one student in each of Nevada’s 17 counties.

An executive summary of the study is available online at <http://www.npri.org/publications/bit-by-bit>. The full study can be downloaded at http://www.npri.org/docLib/20100517_NevadaVirtualSchools.pdf.

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