

## Testimony to the Legislative Committee on Education

Kathleen A. Conaboy, McDonald Carano Wilson - representing K 12, Inc.  
April 7, 2010

Good morning....  
Name

K 12, Inc is a

- Curriculum and education management services company that works with charter schools and school districts in 25 states and in DC, making K 12 the nation's largest provider of online school programs to students in kindergarten through high school
- As of Fall 2009, more than 70,000 full-time students were enrolled in K 12-affiliated schools
- K 12 affiliated schools employ more than 2,000 teachers, the largest network of online school teachers in the U.S. K 12 provides professional development and training for these teachers at an annual conference and via multiple sessions throughout the academic year
- In Nevada, K 12 provides the curriculum and serves as the EMO for Nevada Virtual Academy, a statewide charter school authorized by the State Board of Education. NVVA has grown from 300+ students in its first year of operation in 2007 to 2,100 students this academic year. Our students live in all 17 Nevada counties.

As Nevada seeks to design innovations that will merit funding for the Race to the Top, I wanted to inform you that the Council of Chief State School Officers has created a clearinghouse containing information on education companies and organizations willing to assist states with their RTTT applications. Submissions made to the clearinghouse are searchable and accessible only to state education agency staff members.

<http://ccsso.confex.com/ccsso/rttt2009/webprogramvalidate.cgi?mode=preliminary>

EXHIBIT B Education

Document consists of 18 pages.

X Entire document provided.

Due to size limitations, \_\_\_\_\_ provided. A copy of the complete document is available through the Research Library (775/684-6827) or e-mail [library@lcb.state.nv.us](mailto:library@lcb.state.nv.us).

Meeting Date 040710\_

K 12, Inc has submitted a number of models to the Clearinghouse and I'd like to share two of them with you today.

Let me provide the context:

In late March, during the announcement of the RTTT Phase 1 awards to Delaware and Tennessee, the US Department of Education highlighted the strengths of the winning applications. These included:

- statewide buy-in
- commitment to reform from key stakeholders, including elected officials, teacher union leaders, and business leaders.
- 100% of school districts committed to implementing RTTT reforms
- aggressive plans to improve teacher and principal evaluation, use data to inform instructional decisions, and turn around their lowest-performing schools

K 12, Inc asked me to describe two models to help mitigate under-performance:

### **K 12 Classroom Solutions for Low-Performing Schools**

K 12 considers this a transformative initiative. The model is designed to increase student achievement AND the productivity of existing teachers and principals. The program has been tested in seven pilots, all of which have shown considerable student improvement.

On page 4 of your handout, you'll see the description of the model...

### **K 12 Pathways: High School Completion Model**

This is a true pilot and has been implemented in only one location, the Youth Connections Charter School in Chicago, which is associated with the Malcolm X Community College. This model is designed to address what Secretary Duncan has called “drop-out factories” by helping to re-capture non-graduates while they are still eligible to complete a

The model requires daily attendance at a physical site – perhaps a community college – and provides the structure, support and social services necessary to build and sustain academic progress and help change the mindset of young persons who may go on to college or into the workforce.

Beginning on page 2, you will see the details of the model...

My second agenda item today has to do with **implementing appropriate statutes and regulations that show support for reform**, I'd like to remind the committee of statutory changes the charter school community sought in the 2009 legislative session. Unfortunately, none of the legislation I am about to describe was passed, but I request that this committee re-consider some of the concepts at your work session in May:

In **AB 181**, we sought to clarify portions of NRS 386 that seemed unclear or unwieldy in their implementation.

Input from a number of schools:

- Mike Kazek from NVVA
- Chris Ferrari from Imagine Schools
- Craig Butz from Connections
- Leigh Berdrow from the Academy for Career Education
- Michele Robinson from Odyssey
- John Hawk from Nevada State High School
- Cisco Aguilar from Agassi

Multiple conversations with Super Rheault and Deputy Super Wells

Changes suggested in NRS 386 included but were not limited to :

- eliminate the Board's Subcommittee on Charter Schools
- composition of the founding committees for charter schools to include parents and persons with expertise in such categories as accounting, financial services, law and human resources; membership of the governing body
- better define the process for filing charter amendments
- set parity in fees – currently 2% for all new schools and 1% for district schools and 1.5% for board-sponsored schools

### **SB 384**

arbitrarily sought to cut the DSA to distance education schools; we argued that, while we do not maintain brick-and-mortar infrastructure, we have significant investment in technology architecture and, in the case of K 12, Inc and several others, huge investments in curriculum development and assessment systems

Deputy Super Wells suggested the Department might engage in a cost study during this interim, but I believe other considerations – such as RTTT and a special session – have created a lack of time to conduct such a study.

### **AB 489/ and companion SB 385**

Based on a model presented to the 2008 interim committee on ed  
Formation of the charter School Institute – paid director and a seven-member board appointed by the Gov and the Legislature

Entity established as an alternative authorizer (which is why the Subcommittee was deleted in AB 181) that would

- provide technical assistance to help charter schools get started, to flourish, to share best practices, to apply for grants, etc.
- Also help schools comply with all state and federal regulations

- Separate these functions from the audit and oversight functions for which the department is responsible to the feds on behalf of all schools

Schools could migrate from their current sponsors

Free the Bd of Ed to focus on global policy issues and implementation

Two unresolved issues:

- whether the Institute could actually promulgate regs
- setting of fees – grandfathering of existing schools

In conclusion, I'd like to reiterate a very important point:

Within your existing charter schools and within the EMOs engaged by a number of the charters, and within the boards that helped establish and now govern Nevada's charter schools, there is a talent base and a wealth of replicable experience that could inform the Nevada RTTT application. Some of us are not district-based, so we are not included in the deliberations when districts come to the table to brainstorm. This is a shortcoming in the planning process. Please call on us for ideas, for resources and for support.

I have heard Dr. Rheault say that, by enrollment, the state board-sponsored charter schools are the second largest school district in the state. Our voice in support of the RTTT application could be significant. Call on us to participate. Use our resources. Let us help with the RTTT process.



unleash the xPotential

# K12 Classroom Solutions

# K12 Classroom is the Solution for Low Performing Schools



- Scalable
- Proven
- Sustainable
- Non-intrusive

Technology in the classroom has the potential to increase student achievement and teacher productivity without changing the staff or the collective bargaining agreement.

# Seven Discovery School Pilots



- William H. Hunter School  
Philadelphia, PA  
Math, Science, History, and Art
- Draper School  
Washington, DC  
Science
- Fuller Normal Advanced Technology Charter School  
Greenville, SC  
Math, Science, History, and Art
- North Panola School District  
North Panola, MS  
3 elementary schools, 1 junior high school  
Math and Science



# The Discovery School Offering



- K12 plays an “IMO” role
  - Instructional Management Organization
  - Focus on instruction, training, and student achievement
  - **Work with existing staff and administration** often with existing collective bargaining terms
- Emphasize K12’s math, science, and technology, also offer K12’s history and art programs
- K12 provides a suite of online tools, online courses, and physical materials
- K12 Teaching and Learning Coach (TLC) is onsite daily to provide support and professional development
- K12 and TLC seek to create a school culture focused on improved instruction and measurable student achievement gains
- Have focused thus far on mostly high-poverty schools in need of restructuring.
- Requires each classroom to have a high-speed internet connection and an interactive whiteboard.
  - Cost per IT upgrade is approximately \$3000 per room

# Hunter School Case Study



## William H. Hunter School - School District of Philadelphia



### About Hunter School

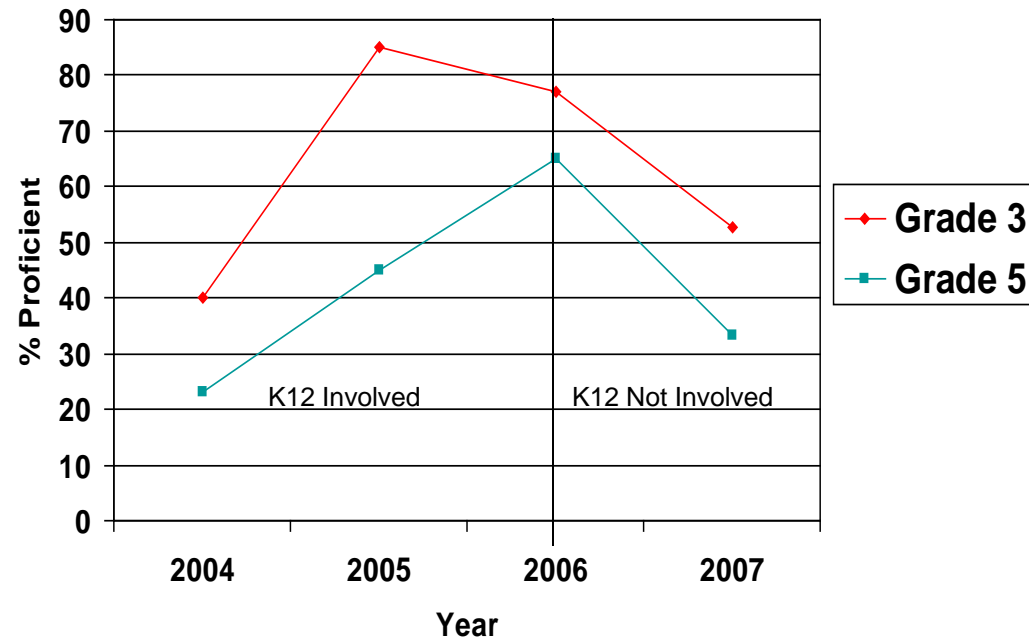
- Located in Norris Square neighborhood
- 600 students in grades K-8
- 95% qualify for free/reduced lunches
- 25% study English as a Second Language (ESL)
- Numerous bilingual classrooms

### K12 Scope of Work

In 2004, K12 became the sole provider of math, science, art, and history in a traditional brick and mortar classroom. K12 provided a full-time trainer for support.

### Results

After just one full year of using K12, the Hunter School achieved impressive gains on the Pennsylvania PSSA state math exams (see chart).



# Draper Elementary Case Study



## Draper Elementary School – District of Columbia Public Schools



### About Draper Elementary School

- Located in the Anacostia neighborhood of Southeast DC
- Approximately 125 students in grades PK-6
- 100% qualify for free/reduced lunches
- 20% of the students tested receive Special Education services

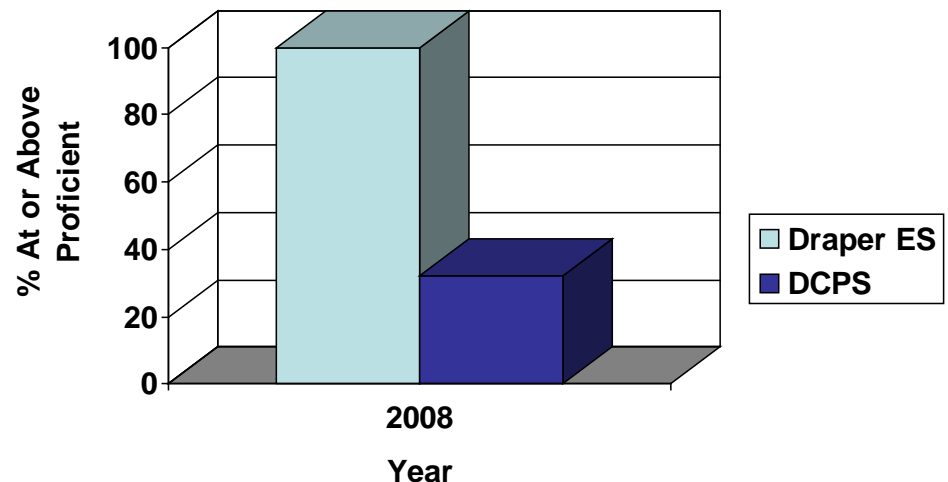
## K12 Scope of Work

In February 2008, K12 became the sole provider of science. In September 2008 K12 Math was implemented as a supplement to their existing Math curriculum. K12 provided a trainer for on-site support.

## Results

After just 3 months of using K12 Science, Draper Elementary achieved impressive results on the DC CAS 5<sup>th</sup> grade Science test.

Results of the DC-CAS Fifth Grade Science Test



# Fuller Normal Advanced Technology Charter School Case Study



## Fuller Normal Advanced Technology Charter School- Greenville, SC



### About FNATCS

- 120 students in grades K-6
- 98% qualify for free/reduced lunches
- 10% qualify for Special Education services
- Won the 2007 InnoVision Technology Award for Innovation in Education for the state

## K12 Scope of Work

In 2006, the first year of the charter, the FNATCS Board of Directors contracted with K12 for their math, science, history and art curriculum. K12 provided a full-time trainer for daily on-site support.

## Results

After just two years of using the K12 curriculum, FNATCS made the highest gains in Math of any school in SC.

## Palmetto Achievement Challenge Test- Math

	2007	2008	Difference
<b>South Carolina</b>			
gr. 3	78.5	77.2	-1.3
gr. 4	78.1	79.0	0.9
gr. 5	77.2	77.6	0.4
<b>Greenville School District</b>			
gr. 3	81.8	81.7	-0.1
gr. 4	78.8	80.8	2.0
gr. 5	79.6	80.2	0.6
<b>FNATCS</b>			
gr. 3	52.6	76.9	24.3
gr. 4	20.0	68.4	48.4
gr. 5	34.8	62.5	27.7

# North Panola School District Case Study

## North Panola School District, Panola County, MS



### About the North Panola School District

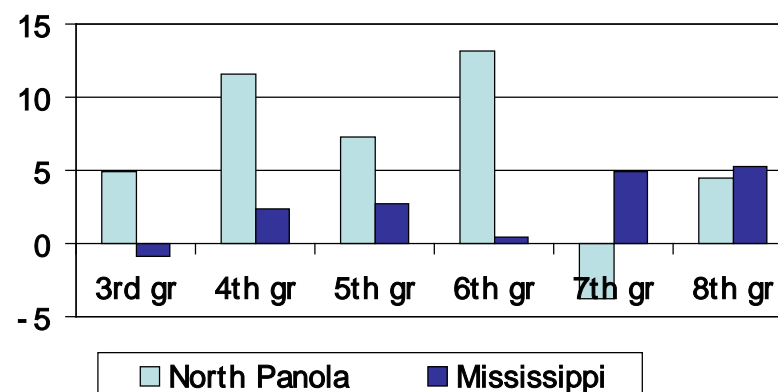
- Located in northern Mississippi
- Three elementary schools; one junior high school
- Approximately 1200 students in grades K-8
- 95+% qualify for free/reduced lunches
- All schools are Title 1

### K12 Scope of Work

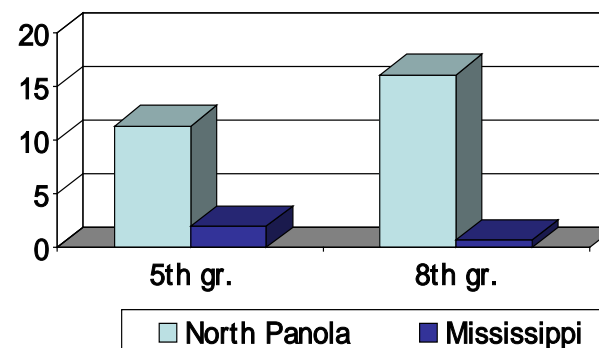
The Mississippi Department of Education, under the guidance of State Superintendent Bounds, engaged K12 to help improve the daily instruction of math and science in the North Panola School District, which was recently taken over by the state. In August 2008, K12 became the sole provider of Math and Science for the three elementary schools and one junior high school in the district. As a result of this partnership, K12 provides:

- Math and Science curriculum materials
- Online School access for teachers, students and parents
- A trainer at each site for daily on-site support and professional development
- Promethean Boards for every classroom using the program
- Scantron Performance Series for Math and Science

Average Increase of Students Proficient or Above on MCT2 Math



Average Increase of Students Proficient or Above on MCT2 Science





For more information please contact:

Sue Furick

Senior Director of Classroom Academics

[sfurick@k12.com](mailto:sfurick@k12.com)

703.483.7227



## **K<sup>12</sup> Pathways: A High School Completion Model For Out-of-School Youth**

*Every school day, seven thousand students leave high school without a regular diploma. The graduation rate for poor and minority students hovers around 50 percent. In two thousand of the nation's high schools – known as “dropout factories” – dropping out is more common than graduating.<sup>1</sup>*

*Alliance for Excellent Education, April 2009*

*In a global economy where the most valuable skill you can sell is your knowledge, a good education is no longer just a pathway to opportunity – it is a pre-requisite. Right now, three-quarters of the fastest-growing occupations require more than a high school diploma. And yet, just over half of our citizens have that level of education. We have one of the highest high school dropout rates of any industrialized nation. And half of the students who begin college never finish... I ask every American to commit to at least one year or more of higher education or career training. This can be community college or a four-year school; vocational training or an apprenticeship. But whatever the training may be, every American will need to get more than a high school diploma. And dropping out of high school is no longer an option.*

*President Barack Obama, February 2009*

Between the reality of the first statement and the vision of the second is a national goal that rivals our aim of reaching the moon forty-five years ago. Millions of young lives rest in the balance. And the success - or failure – of our present school reform efforts, in particular our campaign to turn around the lowest-performing high schools, will depend on how boldly we act.

To help answer the challenge, K<sup>12</sup>, a leading educational innovator, is partnering with districts to offer our Pathways program. An enhancement to a district's existing school turnaround efforts, K<sup>12</sup> Pathways targets out-of-school youth who are able to graduate in the amount of time left before they reach the state's age-limit for K-12 funding.

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<sup>1</sup> Alliance for Excellent Education, Policy Brief, April 2009, “Action Required: Addressing the Nation's Lowest Performing High Schools” by Lyndsay M. Pinkus.



K<sup>12</sup> Pathways is successful because it is structured, yet flexible enough to address the major reasons students leave school. In a seminal study sponsored by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation entitled *The Silent Epidemic: Perspectives of High School Dropouts*, students reported the following:

- Feeling bored and disengaged (nearly half the respondents listed this as the primary reason for dropping out and it was the top reason listed by those with high GPAs);
- Not motivated (over 65% said they would have worked harder if more was demanded of them);
- Couldn't keep up with school work (45% said they started high school unprepared academically and that supports that might have made a difference, e.g. individualized instruction, weren't available to them);
- Feeling out-of-place in a traditional high school of 14-17 yr olds (75% of students in the above study said they'd reenroll in a high school *for students their age* if they could); and
- Managing real life circumstances (32 % of respondents in the Gates study quit school to get a job to make money, 26% had become a parent, and 22% had to care for a family member).

K<sup>12</sup> Pathways can help address each of these.

### Solution

Working under the aegis of the Chicago Public Schools Graduation Pathways and Office of New Schools, K<sup>12</sup> – in partnership with Youth Connections Charter School and Malcolm X College (one of the City Colleges of Chicago) – has developed a high school completion program designed to serve Chicago's out-of-school youth. K<sup>12</sup> believes the initial successes of this program can help districts with their pressing high school turnaround efforts.

K<sup>12</sup> Pathways is a “stand-alone” program containing all the flexibility and personalized instruction of K<sup>12</sup>'s online programs which are critical to re-engaging students who have left the system, but, at the same time, requiring daily attendance at a physical site - preferably a postsecondary education institution. Our model provides the structure, support, and social services necessary to build and sustain academic progress with over-age students and seeds the habits and mindset of daily life in college and the workforce.

Highlights of the program include:

- **Full-time enrollment in online courses;** students attend the program site for up to 50% of each day where they complete their online work and have access to staff instructors who help with remediation and administer proctored assessments. The program also provides students with support services including academic counseling, mentoring, social service referrals, tutoring, guidance counseling, college counseling, career counseling, and student clubs and activities.



- **Scheduling flexibility** for the remaining 50% of a typical school day, a feature that is especially crucial for students who are parents and have child-care issues, students who work, and students who are responsible for younger siblings or relatives. Students complete the other half of their weekly instruction time online at home or from other locations with Internet access according to their individual schedules. Their attendance time away from the Learning Center is documented by online log-in and coursework completion.
- **Multiple student sessions** at the program site offered on a staggered schedule each school day to accommodate students' work and childcare responsibilities.
- **An education program that is individualized for each student.** Upon enrollment, student transcripts are evaluated and specific course recommendations are made based on academic ability and progress toward high school credit requirements. An Alternative Education Plan (AEP) is developed to suit each student including required courses, academic progress, and long and short term goals. With K<sup>12</sup>'s 110 high school courses and four levels of core subjects, courses are selected based on individual student needs.
- **Certified teachers** who provide support and instructional management on-site and will work one-on-one and with small groups of students to provide remediation and support as needed. Highly-qualified subject-specific teachers are available on-line. If remediation is needed, these subject-specific teachers will do small/large group sessions using a web conferencing platform.
- A physical site that is ideally part of a more comprehensive **partnership with a local community college.** In these types of partnerships, students have access to the community college's library, cafeteria, student areas, events, counseling, financial planning office, and childcare facilities, as well as dual credit or dual enrollment opportunities.

### High School Turnaround

Our high school completion model is a pathway to college and/or career training that works with over-age, under-credited, out-of-school youth to prepare them for success by helping them complete a *meaningful* high school curriculum. It is far more than a simple credit-recovery program.

K<sup>12</sup> Pathways operates in partnership with one or more district high schools. As the result of our unique model, schools are provided the opportunity not only to increase their graduation rate by reclaiming significant numbers of older students who have dropped out, but they are also able to increase college enrollment and completion rates, numbers that increasingly are being scrutinized by policymakers and funders. Furthermore, since these students have already left the system but are eligible for reenrollment, they generate the funding required to implement the program.

## Reaching the Moon: College Completion

While some 90% of low-income students expect to go to college<sup>2</sup>, less than half enroll and only about 20 % complete a degree or credential.<sup>3</sup> Research indicates that high school coursework is the greatest predictor of success in college<sup>4</sup>, making what *kind* of high school completion program an older-age, out-of-school youth receives vitally important. The primary mission of K<sup>12</sup> Pathways is to ensure that graduates are truly ready for college or career training – academically and in terms of their overall development, habits of mind, and understanding of the process and culture of higher education. Not all students will seek higher education upon graduation, but no student should be denied the opportunity because he or she is unprepared.

Most of the students in K<sup>12</sup>'s Chicago program simply got off track and were desperate to find a new path. We invite you to contact us to discuss how our promising K<sup>12</sup> Pathways program might help your students do the same.

For more information:

Sue Furick  
Senior Director  
[sfurick@k12.com](mailto:sfurick@k12.com)  
(703) 483-7227

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<sup>2</sup> Engaging the Voices of Students: A Report on the 2007 & 2008 High School Survey of Student Engagement", Indiana University Center for Evaluation and Education Policy (CEEP).

<sup>3</sup> National Center for Education Statistics, 2007.

<sup>4</sup> High School Teaching for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, Preparing Students for College", Policy Brief, Alliance for Excellent Education, September 2007.