

Jay Schuler Testimony – February 10

Good morning! It is a pleasure to address the Legislative Committee on Education today.

My name is Jay Schuler and I am here representing Nevada Parents for Online Education. We are a non-profit volunteer organization created to advocate on behalf of parent choice and public online education.

On behalf of the parents in our organization, I'd like to express our appreciation for Governor Sandoval and the Nevada Legislature, who have embraced the value, uniqueness and benefits of online public schools and the positive contributions they make to our children's education.

For many children, a traditional school setting simply is not a good fit. A child might find the classroom is not moving at the right pace, depending on whether they are gifted learners or need more one-on-one instruction. In some cases, a child might have medical reasons or other social challenges that make it difficult for them to participate productively in a group environment.

Technology makes it possible to offer education in non-traditional settings. Please understand, that non-traditional does not mean lesser quality. Academic standards for online schools are exactly the same as those at other public schools.

Our teachers are state-certified, and student academic progress is rigorously monitored by state education officials. Public online school students are partnered with teachers who speak and meet with them regularly, who teach synchronous group classes and provide asynchronous one-on-one interaction. Teachers track student progress and plan group activities throughout the school year, including community days, field trips and club projects, to provide socialization.

More than half of the states in the U.S. now have statewide online public schools. In Nevada, public virtual education gives parents unprecedented freedom to choose a school program that works best for their children.

In our family, two of my children have attended and one has graduated the Nevada Virtual Academy, an online public charter school sponsored by the State Public Charter School Authority. We find the flexibility of online education invaluable. I Travel extensively for work, and online education allows my children to travel with me keeping us together. It has allowed hands on experience in topics they are learning. We have made visits to the Petrified Forest, science museums, Washington DC, and Cape Canaveral. Typical brick and mortar schools do not offer these hands on learning opportunities and would cause my children to be left behind with family, friends, or a nanny.

I encourage the Legislative Committee on Education to continue to pursue our collective goal of embracing excellence in education and ensuring that all students, regardless of where they attend school, have the opportunity to succeed. Thank you.