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CENTER FOR RESEARCH ON EDUCATION OUTCOMES

# Online Schools: Superheroes or Cybervillains?

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# Bottom Line

The experience and performance of Online Charter Schools perfectly exemplifies the paralysis of current education policy.

# Quick Tutorial

Most online education is “blended” with in class time.  
65% of courses are taken by juniors and seniors.

Full-time online programs allow students to enroll and earn academic credit based on successful completion of courses provided by the online school.

Full-time online schools can be managed by a state, district, university, charter school, not-for-profit, for-profit or other institution.

# Quick Tutorial

## 447 full-time virtual schools

- enrolled close to 262,000 students in 2013-2014.
- 33 States allow full-time virtual schools
- even split charter - district

## Average enrollment differs by type of provider:

- For-profit EMO: 1027
- Non-profit EMO: 286
- Independently run: 266

Fewer minority or low-income students enrolled.

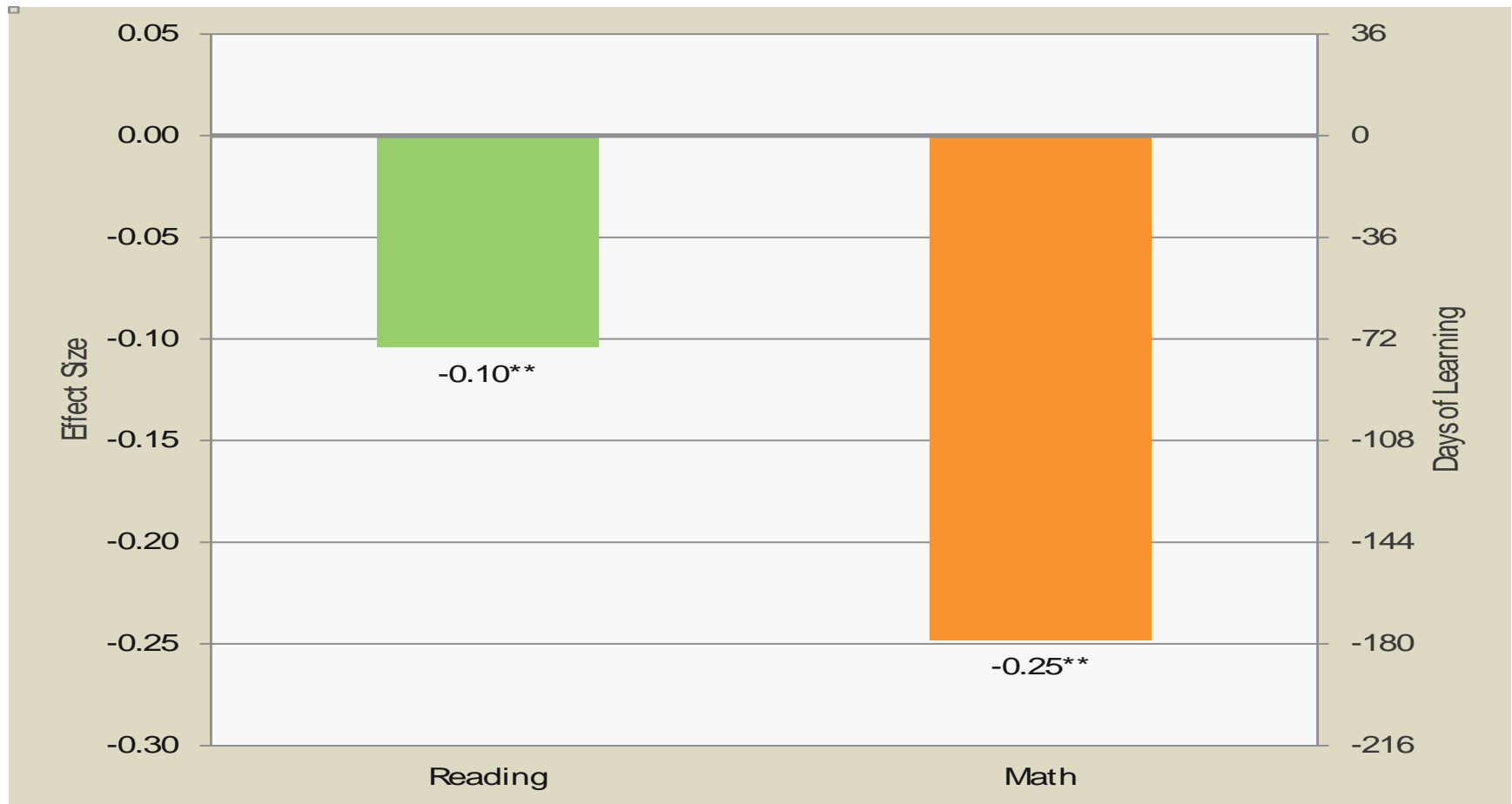
# Included States

- Arkansas
- Arizona
- California
- Colorado
- DC
- Florida
- Georgia
- Illinois
- Louisiana
- Michigan
- Minnesota
- New Mexico
- Nevada
- Ohio
- Oregon
- Pennsylvania
- Texas
- Utah
- Wisconsin

# Methods

- Matched Comparison
  - more details at [Credo.Stanford.edu](https://Credo.Stanford.edu)
- Pre-post enrollment comparisons
- Panel data analysis

# Overall Performance Online Charters vs TPS



\*\* Denotes significant at the .01 level.

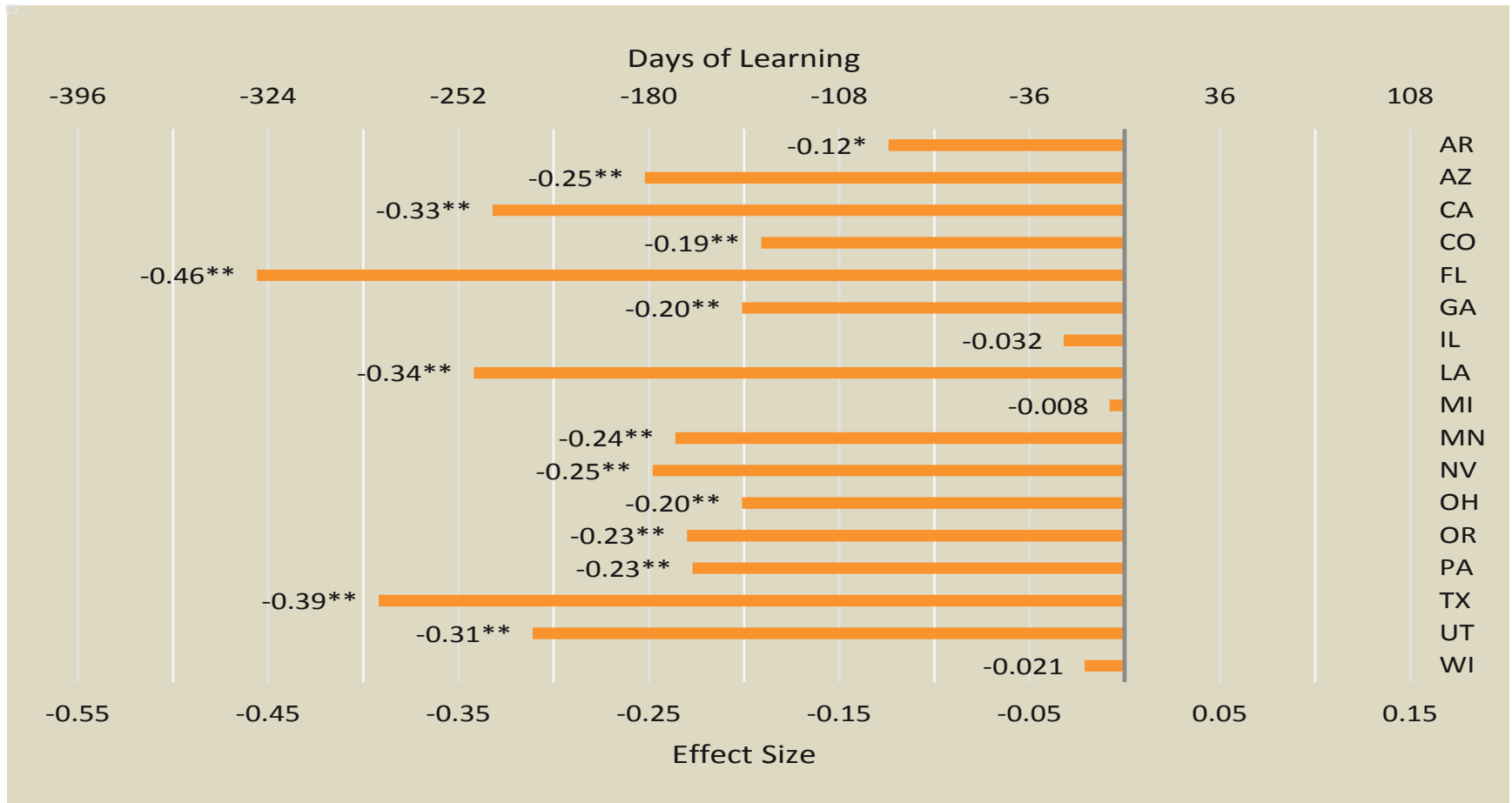
# Reading Performance by State Online Charters vs TPS



\*\* Denotes significant at the .01 level.



# Math Performance by State Online Charters vs TPS



\*\* Denotes significant at the .01 level.

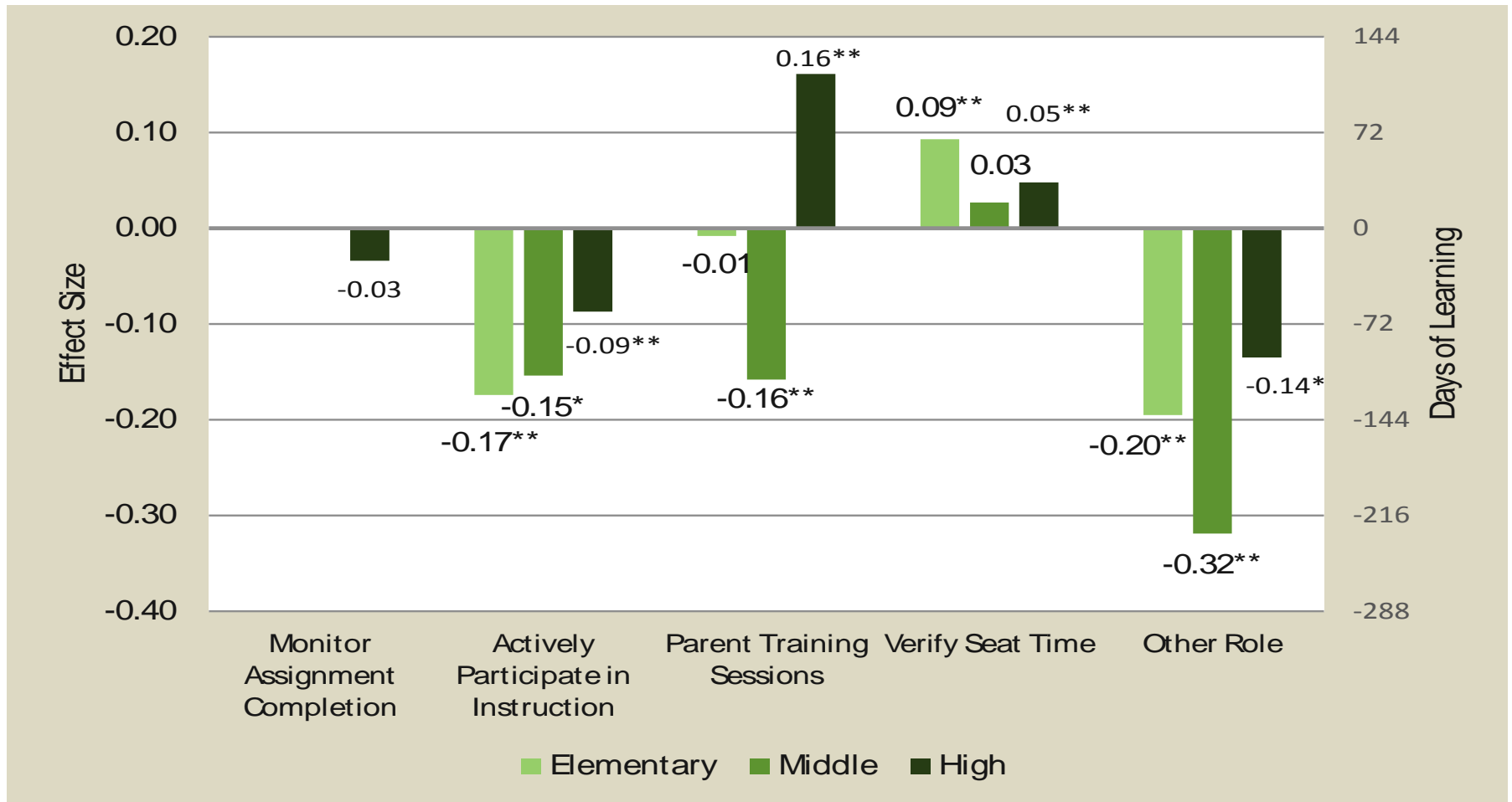
# Performance by Race/Ethnicity

## Online Charters vs TPS

| Racial-Ethnic Subpopulation | Reading | Days of Learning | Math    | Days of Learning |
|-----------------------------|---------|------------------|---------|------------------|
| White                       | -0.11** | -79              | -0.25** | -180             |
| Black                       | -0.08** | -58              | -0.22** | -158             |
| Hispanic                    | -0.11** | -79              | -0.29** | -209             |
| Asian/Pacific Islander      | -0.09** | -65              | -0.26** | -187             |
| Native American             | -0.12** | -86              | -0.30** | -216             |
| Multi-Racial                | -0.09** | -65              | -0.26** | -187             |

\*\* Denotes significant at the .01 level.

# Expected Parental Roles



# Implications

1. Current online charter schools may be a good fit for some students, but the evidence suggests that online charters don't serve very well the students that currently attend these schools, much less the general population.
2. Current oversight policies in place may not be sufficient for online charter schools.
3. States should examine the current progress of existing online programs before allowing expansion.

# Impacts

## Public response:

Advocates from all sides criticized online model

Response from providers: apples: oranges

Other researchers took aim at methods

## Regulatory response:

Four states launch hearings or inquiries

## Market response:

K12, Inc. stock price dropped 22% the month CREDO's report was released

# Issues

1. Desperate need to innovate
2. Market based protections are *WEAK AT BEST*
3. Isolation of students and parents
4. Authorizers face extreme challenges



*Let's Chat!*



*Thank you!*