



Connections Education Statement on the Thomas B. Fordham Institute's report on Ohio e-Schools

August 3, 2016 (Baltimore, MD) — Connections Education is committed to innovative online education options for families who want and need a personalized learning experience beyond the traditional classroom. Central to our mission: quality, accountability, community. We've supported the full-time online school, Ohio Connections Academy, since 2003.

Throughout the years we've celebrated the school's many [milestones and achievements](#) - both academic and emotional, like the heartwarming return of a graduate who came back to the school to teach and the recent receipt of the Ohio State Board of Education's first "Momentum Award," that recognizes schools and districts that exceed expectations in student growth.

It continues to be an honor to support [Ohio Connections Academy](#) and work with such dedicated educators.

As such, we were particularly interested in the new report by the Thomas B. Fordham Institute that explores e-schools in Ohio.

We appreciate Fordham's effort and share their acknowledgement that virtual school can be the right fit for some students, but that full-time online school is not the right choice for every student. But like recent [reports](#) before it (CREDO, NAPCS), the Fordham report falls short in presenting a complete, accurate, and actionable picture of full-time online school and future success.

Overlooking individuality, the report makes blanket assertions about all e-schools in the state. Noticeably absent was reference to the reasons *why* students choose online schools - a factor we feel must be addressed and in many ways is vital to this type of analysis.

Related, the report perpetuates the use of a methodology type (to arrive at performance) that does not accurately account for a mobile student population and how they interact with online school. It is troubling that educators, researchers, and the media alike are willing to accept and promote this methodology as final.

Finally, recommendations regarding funding are short-sighted and don't address concrete school operations and the fact that online schools in Ohio are already funded at almost 50% less than traditional schools.

We continue to support the need for research about virtual school and welcome the opportunity to discuss these findings in detail. And we will continue to amplify the voice of the thousands of families who have chosen the schools we support -- choosing a quality school option for their students' individual needs.

Articles / Statements of Note:

- [RedefinEd podcast](#) featuring Connections Education President Steven Guttentag and goes in-depth on issues related to recent research
- Connections Education's statements regarding recent [CREDO report](#); [NAPCS report](#)
- Connections Education President Steven Guttentag's [op-ed about the related NAPCS research](#)
- Connections Academy annual [Parent Satisfaction Survey results](#)

About Connections Education

Connections Education is a leading provider of high-quality, highly accountable virtual education solutions for students in grades K–12. Founded in 2001, the company's Connections Academy delivers individualized learning to students by supporting tuition-free virtual public schools. In the 2015–2016 school year, Connections Academy supported 30 virtual public schools in 26 states—serving more than 65,000 students. Connections Education also offers a fully online private school for students worldwide. The Connections Learning by Pearson division meets the needs of schools, school districts, and other institutions with a full range of digital learning solutions for grades K–12 including: online courses, a program for homebound students, a digital learning platform, and private and public online schools. Connections Education is based in Baltimore, Maryland and was named a 2015 and 2014 “Top Workplace” by the Baltimore Sun and a 2013 “Best Place to Work” by Baltimore magazine. Connections Education is part of the global learning company Pearson.