

# Pennsylvania State Profile

**Capital Area Online Learning Association (CAOLA), a DLC State Affiliate, was instrumental in conducting the research for this profile.**

*Updated September 2023*

Pennsylvania has multi-district full-time schools, a large consortium program, and a growing number of districts and Intermediate Units (IU) programs. Pennsylvania does not have a state virtual school. The state had 10 cyber charter schools that served 57,417 students in the 2022-23 SY after 14 cyber charter schools served 57,455 students during the 2021-22 SY. The following illustrates the impact of the pandemic on the virtual charter school student enrollment.

- 39,266 students in SY 2019-20
- 61,760 students in SY 2020-21
- 57,455 students in SY 2021-22
- 57,417 students in SY 2022-23

State virtual school?	NO
Multi-district fully online schools?	YES
State approval process for online providers?	NO
State approval process for online courses?	NO

Although enrollments have declined since the COVID peak, there was still a 46% increase for SY 2022-23 over the pre-pandemic student enrollments.

The [Capital Area Online Learning Association](#) (CAOLA) is the largest online learning consortium in the state, supported by the Capital Area Intermediate Unit. The following illustrates the impact of the pandemic on the CAOLA's student and course enrollment.

- 17,053 students and 103,835 course enrollments across 11 Intermediate Units and 137 school and district programs during the 2022-23 SY.
- 16,586 students across 115,949 course enrollments during the 2021-22 SY.
- 40,203 students and 250,551 course enrolments SY 2020-21.

District and IU programs do not report to the state, so it is unclear how many there are or how many students they serve.

Cyber charters have dominated multi-district fully online options in Pennsylvania. The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) reviews each cyber charter's school's performance on state assessment tests, standardized tests, and other performance indicators to ensure compliance with federal and state academic standards. In addition, it assesses whether a cyber charter school is in compliance with its charter. Information on charter school applications, renewals, enrollments and other requirements is noted on the [PDE website](#).

IUs are also opening cyber programs for students in their regions. These programs typically offer supplemental or blended courses (although some offer a fully online option), do not require state? permission to operate, and do not require separate reporting as they simply roll into overall district accountability.

There is considerable district activity including:

- School District of Philadelphia [Virtual Academy](#) is a full-time program for students in grades K-12.
- Pittsburgh Public Schools' [Online Academy](#) offers full-time online options for district students.
- Allentown School District offers K-12 students online options through the [ASD Virtual Campus](#).
- [Reading Virtual Academy](#) provides K-12 district students with online options in both fully online and hybrid formats.

## **State Policies**

No major legislation impacting online and/or blended learning was passed through September 2023.

[Act 88](#) (2002) allowed for the establishment of cyber charter schools in Pennsylvania. Oversight is regulated by the charter school law that oversees all charter schools, as well as regulations specific to cyber charters. Pennsylvania System of Cyber Charter Review (PASCCR), the charter school's annual report to the state, and the original charter school application to the Pennsylvania Department of Education explain how each school meets Pennsylvania's academic standards and assessment requirements, what technical support will be given to students, how student work will be monitored, what type of communication will be held with students and parents, and how often that communication will take place.

[\*DLC State Profile Key Terms\*](#)