

ALEC EXPOSED

"ALEC" has long been a secretive collaboration between Big Business and "conservative" politicians. Behind closed doors, they ghostwrite "model" bills to be introduced in state capitols across the country. This agenda-underwritten by global corporations—includes major tax loopholes for big industries and the super rich, proposals to offshore U.S. jobs and gut minimum wage, and efforts to weaken public health, safety, and environmental protections. Although many of these bills have become law, until now, their origin has been largely unknown. With **ALEC EXPOSED**, the Center for Media and Democracy hopes more Americans will study the bills to understand the depth and breadth of how big corporations are changing the legal rules and undermining democracy across the nation.

ALEC's Corporate Board --in recent past or present

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 - Energy Future Holdings
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 - PhRMA
 - Kraft Foods, Inc.
 - Coca-Cola Co.
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 - Reed Elsevier, Inc.
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 - Reynolds American Inc.
 - Wal-Mart Stores, Inc.
 - Salt River Project
 - Altria Client Services, Inc.
 - American Bail Coalition
 - State Farm Insurance
- For more on these corporations, search at www.SourceWatch.org.

DID YOU KNOW? Corporations VOTED to adopt this. Through ALEC, global companies work as "equals" in "unison" with politicians to write laws to govern your life. Big Business has "a VOICE and a VOTE," according to newly exposed documents. **DO YOU?**

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Virtual Public Schools Act¹

Did you know that an online (virtual) for-profit school company was the corporate co-chair in 2011?

Declaration. The General Assembly hereby finds and declares that:

(a) Meeting the educational needs of children in our state's schools is of the greatest importance to the future welfare of [STATE];

was your state inserted?

(b) Closing the achievement gap between high-performing students, including the gap between minority and non-minority students, including the gap between minority and non-minority students and between economically disadvantaged students and their more advantaged peers, is a significant and present challenge; and

(c) Providing a broader range of educational options to parents and utilizing existing resources, along with technology, may help students in our state improve their academic achievement;

(d) Many of our school districts currently lack the capacity to provide other public school choices for students whose schools are low performing.

(2) The General Assembly further finds and declares that virtual schools established in this article:

(a) Provide [STATE] families with an alternative choice to access additional educational resources in an effort to improve academic achievement;

(b) Must be recognized as public schools and provided equitable treatment and resources as any other public school in the state.

Simple Version: "Nothing in this bill shall preclude the use of computer- and Internet-based instruction for students in a virtual or remote setting."

Section 1. {Definition}

a. "Virtual school" shall mean an independent public school in which the school uses technology in order to deliver a significant portion of instruction to its students via the Internet in a virtual or remote setting.

b. "Sponsor" shall mean the public school district, charter school board, or state department having a fiduciary responsibility for the operation of the virtual school.

Section 2. {Accountability Requirements}

a. *Sponsor*: A virtual school shall be evaluated annually by its Sponsor based on the following criteria:

i. The extent to which school demonstrates increases in student achievement according to the goals of its authorizing contract and state academic standards.

ii. The accountability and viability of the virtual school, as demonstrated by its academic, fiscal, and operational performance.

b. *Student and Family*.

i. Each student will have access to a sequential curriculum that meets or exceeds the state's academic standards and that has an interactive program with significant online components.

ii. Each student will be required to have __ (900) hours of learning opportunities per academic year

iii. Each student will be assessed regularly in Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies.

iv. For each family with a student enrolled, the virtual school shall:

(a) provide instructional materials;

(b) ensure access to necessary technology such as a computer and printer; and

(c) ensure access to an Internet connection used for schoolwork.

v. Virtual schools are prohibited from providing allotments to students or families to purchase instructional programs or materials. Nothing in this clause shall prohibit virtual schools from reimbursing families for costs associated with their Internet connection for use in the virtual school program.

c. *Teacher*: Each teacher shall be qualified to teach in the State of _____ under existing law.

d. *Offices and facilities*: A virtual school shall maintain an administrative office within the state in which its Sponsor is located, which shall be considered its principal place of business.

e. *Open Enrollment*: Any student who meets state residency requirements may enroll in a virtual school.

Endnotes

[1] "Virtual public schools" is a term used in many states to refer to these kinds of schools. Other terms include distance learning schools, cyber-schools, online learning schools, etc. The authors recommend that legislators choose the term that best serves the purposes of the legislation in their state.

marketing tip...

Exposed

By the Center for
Media and Democracy
www.prwatch.org

Adopted by the Education Task Force at the States and Nation Policy Summit, December 4, 2004. Approved by the ALEC Board of Directors January 2005.

Related Files

[The Virtual Public Schools Act](#) (Microsoft Word Document)

About Us and **ALEC EXPOSED**. The Center for Media and Democracy reports on corporate spin and government propaganda. We are located in Madison, Wisconsin, and publish www.PRWatch.org, www.SourceWatch.org, and now www.ALECexposed.org. For more information contact: editor@prwatch.org or 608-260-9713.

From CMD: This "model" legislation says that "virtual" or online schools must be recognized as public schools and provided equitable treatment and resources as any other public schools in the state. This language appears to include charter-type arrangements. These schools would receive the state per-pupil allocation for each student without having to provide the services provided in traditional brick and mortar schools. The financial windfall is clear. The role and value of virtual schools is being debated in many states. The bill also allows the for-profit virtual school companies (such as Connections Academy, whose Senior VP is the corporate co-chair of ALEC's Education Task Force, which adopted this bill) to subsidize the student's home internet access, which could create additional incentives for financially stressed families to opt for this type of instruction....