Innovative education delivery models that are rooted in flexible and adaptable learning options proved to be highly successful during the pandemic. These models were able to pivot their learning delivery immediately in response to unprecedented school campus closures and were further able to tailor and personalize learning options for all individual students. As a result, these innovative learning models were able to mitigate or prevent altogether the alarming student learning losses that occurred in many rigid, traditional, classroom-only schools. Among these more innovative, flexible, and adaptable learning models are Personalized Learning and other types of nonclassroom-based public charter schools.

Flexible Learning Models Demonstrate Tremendous Value Through The Pandemic

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Students and Parents Are Increasingly Demanding a Flexible, Tailored Education

As the pandemic turned the education world upside down many students and parents had an important realization: a traditional, classroom-only setting did not meet their needs. They realized that a flexible approach to learning was better suited to meet their academic and emotional needs and life circumstances. As a result, parents and students have been increasingly seeking out Personalized Learning public charter schools as they provide choice and flexibility in curriculum and deliver education in many different settings.

Many Disadvantaged Students Thrive in a Personalized Learning Environment

Many low-income, minority, and special needs students who struggle in a traditional classroom-only setting have found great success in a Personalized Learning environment as they receive instruction that is tailored to their needs. Students who are credit deficient or are at risk of dropping out of school have gotten back on track and others thrive by having a choice in how and where they learn. The pandemic emphasized the need for flexible education and underscored the benefits of Personalized Learning education that is designed to meet students where they are.
Personalized Education Is Essential to Closing the Achievement and Equity Gap for Tens of Thousands of Students Annually in California

Personalized Learning public charter schools that are members of the APLUS+ Personalized Learning Network Association currently enroll more than 90,000 K-12 students in California. During the 2020-21 school year, while many students throughout the state struggled academically and emotionally and experienced severe learning loss, Personalized Learning students made huge gains in grade-level proficiency and did not experience learning loss. Personalized Learning public charter schools offer hope and promise to tens of thousands of students who struggle in more rigid, classroom-only models.

Personalized Learning Has Successfully Pioneered Flexible and Adaptable Education Delivery For More than 20 Years

Through a student-centric focus, Personalized Learning public charter schools continue to offer and expand hybrid, individualized education choices that combine learning delivery in-person, online, at home through independent study, through community-based classes, or concurrent enrollment in college courses. The crux of Personalized Learning is providing flexibility and options for every student in how, what, when, where, and with whom they learn so that their education is tailored to their needs, interests, and goals.

All Personalized Learning Public Charter Schools are Tuition-free and Open to All Students

These non-profit and non-sectarian schools:

- Provide rigorous education programs that meet California state standards
- Prioritize strong collaborative relationships with parents and students
- Offer wraparound services including counseling and mental health supports
- Administer and report state testing, including the CAASPP test
- Offer local, internal diagnostic assessments at least twice annually
- Abide by local, state, and federal health and safety protocols
- Employ credentialed teachers
- Serve special education and other special needs students
- Offer small class sizes that are generally limited to 20 students or fewer
- Partner with colleges and businesses to provide students access to post-secondary pathways
Current State Designation of Personalized Learning Public Charter Schools is Harming Students

Personalized Learning Public Charter Schools are classified under state statute as “nonclassroom-based” public charter schools because more than 20% of their enrolled students receive more than 20% of total instruction outside of a classroom. This means that some students at APLUS+ member schools receive in-person instruction up to four out of five days a week and complete assignments outside a school facility the other day.

The term “Nonclassroom-based instruction” is both a confusing and misleading term that has fostered widespread misunderstanding and confusion among both decision-makers and the public and is being used as misguided rationale to cut funding and education opportunities.

A more appropriate term to encompass the numerous education delivery models within this segment is flex-based instruction. Flex-based instruction more accurately encompasses the foundation of flexible and adaptable student-centered delivery that is common among all of these nonclassroom-based education models and more clearly distinguishes them from the more rigid, traditional classroom-only instructional model.

The APLUS+ Network Distinction

APLUS+ member schools are required to demonstrate their strong commitment to the Personalized Learning model, and to uphold high standards of accountability, integrity, and academic excellence. To learn more please visit theaplus.org or contact Jeff Rice, founder/director of APLUS+ at jeff@theaplus.org.
Public Opinion Polling Shows Overwhelming Support for Charter Schools and School Choice

Recent poll data shows that parents increasingly want a flexible, personalized, and tailored education for their children. Parents want more quality school choices and are seeking out and remaining at public charter schools that better meet their students’ needs.

Assessing Voters’ and Parents’ Perspectives on Current Threats to Public Education

Policy Analysis for California Education and the University of Southern California’s Rossier School of Education, August 2022

- Support for charter schools increased 8 points from 2020 to 2022
- More than one-quarter of parents surveyed switched their child’s school during the pandemic. The main reason parents cited for switching schools is wanting a different educational experience for their children (38%).
- Among families that switched schools, most switched from traditional public schools to public charter schools
- An additional 28% of parents are considering a school change in the near future.

Harris Poll: “Never Going Back: An Analysis of Parent Sentiment on Education”
National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, May 2022

- 86% of parents surveyed want other school options for their children beyond the districts to which they’re assigned.
- Since the pandemic, homeschooling and charter schools were the first and second most popular options for parents who decided to switch their child’s school.
- Nearly six in 10 parents said their child was happier as a result of the switch.
- 84% of parents say charter schools should be available to them, regardless of whether they plan to utilize them.

California Charter Schools Association: 2022 Annual Survey Findings
Goodwin Simon Strategic Research, July 2022

- 70% of parents surveyed support charter public schools—a 14-point increase over last year.
- 64% of parents say they would consider enrolling their children in a charter school, including 76% of Spanish-speaking parents.
- Nearly six in 10 parents say public education in California needs “major changes” in the wake of the pandemic.
- 72% of parents say they “should have more public school choices.”