



Submitted by: Shay Angelo, Director of Development, shayangelo@gemprep.org, 813-842-4111 Cell

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VIRTUAL SCHOOL RANKS FIRST IN STATE

Gem Prep: Online (GPO) students ranked highest in the state on the 2021 Spring Idaho Reading Indicator, outperforming the state average by 30 percentage points. In a year that saw declines in education success across our state and nation, these virtual students thrived.



95% of Gem Prep: Online students (grades K-3) **scored at or above grade level compared to the Idaho average of 65%.¹** Studies link 3rd grade reading proficiency with high school graduation rates², noting the impact on student future successes related closely to their reading proficiency in the elementary grades.

“Beginning in 4th grade, students are ‘reading to learn, not learning to read,’ and it is critical they enter this grade

ready to use their reading skill to expand their knowledge. If a student cannot read at grade level by this transitional grade, they can lose ground quickly,” commented Tera Reeves³, Gem Prep: Online College Access Director, “and are at greater risk of dropping out of school altogether.”

A Casey Foundation report noted that “one in six children who do not read proficiently by the end of their third grade year, typically fail to graduate from high school”⁴. With just over 65% of

¹ ID Ed News [Spring Reading Scores, June 2021](#)

² Annie E. Casey Foundation Double Jeopardy [Research](#)

³ Tera Reeves [Bio](#)

⁴ Idaho’s [Graduation Rate](#)



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Idaho's K-3 students reading on grade level this spring, that leaves about 30,000 students who remain behind.⁵

"Our school's focus is on college preparation. And, that has to begin in the early years with mastery building in reading and math so that students are able to progress and succeed in the academic rigor of their middle and high school years," noted Reeves.

Gem Prep: Online, the statewide virtual school, was established in rural Deary, Idaho, in 2004, to offer a high-quality education option for families who desired to school from home. The school reported that not only did their elementary students excel through this unprecedented pandemic year, but their secondary students did, as well. Reeves added, *"For the past five years, our students have outperformed both the state and national averages on the college entrance exam, SAT."*⁶

GPO's class of 2021 saw **91% of seniors graduating with dual college credit**; having **completed an average of 27 college credits each**. Gem Prep: Online students graduate high school having developed [college-necessary competencies](#) like self-motivation and self-discipline along with their AA degree. Through state allotted Advanced Opportunities funds combined with supplementary schools funds, the school enables students to complete their dual college credits tuition-free. **Reeves noted that 2021 graduates saved an average of \$8,700 on college tuition while in high school.**

*Reeves added, "It's more than just the academic rigor of the classes they take and the fact that they can earn their AA. **Beginning in kindergarten, our focus is balanced between academics and competencies; building that whole package. Growing and preparing the whole child.**"*

"We set out to solve the problem of college readiness. We believe that school 'walls' should not define or confine the eager student. We have purposefully pivoted from catering to what has traditionally been easiest for the school side of things (staffing,

⁵ ID Ed News [Spring Reading Scores, June 2021](#)

⁶ 2021 SAT Scores: Gem Prep: Online 1073, State of Idaho average 985, National average, 1008



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schedules, etc.) and shifted to identifying and providing the opportunities that enable kids to take hold of their dreams. ”

The school enrollment window is open (for grades K-12). Families interested in enrollment may apply through the website at www.gemprep.org.

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GEM PREP CONTACT:

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ABOUT GEM PREP: ONLINE

BACKGROUND ON THE SCHOOL

Gem Prep: Online is a free public (not-for-profit) charter school, focusing on college preparation. The school began in 2004 and is free to all Idaho students, statewide, grades K-12.

For more information, visit www.gemprep.org or access the [FAQ](#), [Gem Prep: Results](#).

To apply for enrollment: <https://gemprep.org/gem-prep/apply/>

SPRING 2021 IRI SCORES
STUDENTS SCORING AT or ABOVE GRADE LEVEL
 ALL STUDENTS / GRADES K-3
 State of Idaho Average Score **65.1%**

| GPO | State of Idaho | Compass Public Charter | Virtual School House (Meridian) | Rigby Virtual | Nampa Online Virtual | Inspire Virtual Academies | Virtual School House (Twin) | IDVA (ID Virtual Academy) | Hagerman Virtual | Another Choice Virtual |
|-------|----------------|------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------|----------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|------------------|------------------------|
| 95.0% | 65.1% | 88.7% | 83.6% | 79.3% | 69.0% | 65.0% | 62.3% | 61.0% | 59.1% | 45.0% |

Spring 2021 ISAT ELA

GPO 83%, State 54%*

These are 2021 preliminary results. The state will not publish official results until August 2021.

OTHER GEM PREP SCHOOLS

College Prep K-12 schools.

- **Gem Prep: Online** opened in 2004, serving students in grades K-12 statewide. (A college prep virtual school accessed from home.)



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- **Gem Prep: Pocatello** opened in 2014 (Enrolling K-11 for 2021-22)
- **Gem Prep: Nampa** opened in 2016 (Enrolling K-11 for 2021-22)
- **Gem Prep: Meridian** opened in 2018 (Enrolling K-11 for 2021-22)
- **Gem Prep: Meridian North** will open in 2021 (Enrolling K-5 for 2021-22)
- **Gem Prep: Meridian South** will open in 2022 (Enrollment will open in 02/2022).
- **Gem Prep: Twin Falls** has a proposed opening in 2023