Report to the North Carolina General Assembly

Remote Academies Evaluation

G.S. 115C-234.25

Evaluation of Remote Charter Academies

G.S. 115C-218.125

Date Due: November 15, 2025
DPI Chronological Schedule, 2024–2025

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION VISION
Every public school student in North Carolina will be empowered to accept academic challenges, prepared to pursue their chosen path after graduating high school, and encouraged to become lifelong learners with the capacity to engage in a globally-collaborative society.

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION MISSION
The mission of the North Carolina State Board of Education and the North Carolina Superintendent of Public Instruction is to use their constitutional authority to guard and maintain the right to a public education for every student in North Carolina and to support public school units in providing every student an excellent education that prepares them for success in their next phase of life.

NC DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This evaluation provides an overview of North Carolina's Remote Academies (RAs) and Remote Charter Academies (RCAs). It summarizes the number of schools evaluated, their total enrollment, and key findings. The analysis highlights successes, challenges, and trends observed across RCAs and district-operated virtual academies.

BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

A. LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

This report complies with the State Board of Education's obligation to evaluate both Remote Academies (RAs) operated by local school administrative units (districts) and Remote Charter Academies (RCAs). While authorized under different statutes and in different years, the two models are essentially the same in design: both provide primarily online instruction through a blend of synchronous and asynchronous delivery, expand access to high-quality remote learning, and remain accountable under North Carolina's performance standards. The primary distinction lies in governance—districts versus charter schools—and the legislative timelines that created each. The table below provides a side-by-side comparison of the statutory framework and key features of each model.

Feature	Remote Academies (District-Run)	Remote Charter Academies (Charter-Run)
Statutory Authority	Session Law 2022-74, sec. 7.13 (HB 103); codified in **G.S. 115C-234**	Session Law 2023-134, sec. 7.26 (HB 259); codified in **G.S. 115C-234.25**
Eligible Operators	Local School Administrative Units (districts)	Charter Schools authorized under NC law
Purpose	Expand access to high-quality remote instruction within districts	Expand access to high-quality remote instruction through charters
Instructional Model	Primarily online; combination of synchronous & asynchronous learning	Primarily online; combination of synchronous & asynchronous learning
Accountability	Must meet same accountability/reporting requirements as other district schools	Must meet same accountability/reporting requirements as other charter schools
Approval Process	District must apply to and receive approval from the **State Board of Education**	Charter school must apply to and receive approval from the **State Board of Education**
Enrollment	Students are enrolled in the district/PSU that operates the Remote Academy	Students are enrolled in the charter school operating the RCA
Original Authority Date	2022 (S.L. 2022-74)	2023 (S.L. 2023-134)

While the statutory origins differ, both Remote Academies and Remote Charter Academies reflect North Carolina's broader effort to formalize and expand remote learning options, ensuring that students have access to flexible instructional models that uphold rigorous accountability standards.

B. CURRENT YEAR STATUS (2024–2025)

Public School Unit Code	Public School Unit Name	School Code	School Name	School Performance Grade Score	School Performance Grade	4-Year Cohort Graduation Rate	5-year Cohort Graduation Rate	Economically Disadvantaged Student Percentage
00A	North Carolina Cyber Academy	00A000	North Carolina Cyber Academy	51	D	60.7	65.7	68.4
00B	NC Virtual Academy	00B000	NC Virtual Academy	48	D	79.4	75.9	68.6
33A	North East Carolina Prep	33A310	NE Carolina Prep School Remote Academy	*	I	*	*	*
53B	Ascend Leadership Academy Lee County	53B310	Ascend Leadership Remote Academy	32	F	*	*	51.3
62L	Telra Institute	62L310	Telra Institute Remote Academy	*	I	*	*	*
76A	Uwharrie Charter Academy	76A310	Uwharrie Charter Remote Academy	26	F	81.5	*	42.2
93N	Pine Springs Preparatory Academy	93N310	Pine Springs Preparatory Remote Academy	29	F	<5	*	72.2

Public School Unit Code	Public School Unit Name	School Code	School Name	School Performance Grade Score	School Performance Grade	4-Year Cohort Graduation Rate	5-year Cohort Graduation Rate	Economically Disadvantaged Student Percentage
10	Alamance-Burlington Schools	010450	Alamance Virtual School	49	D	85.7	86.4	63.1
110	Buncombe County Schools	110475	Buncombe County Schools Virtual Academy	60	C	93.9	94.4	49
120	Burke County Schools	120300	Burke Virtual Academy	54	D	*	*	*
130	Cabarrus County Schools	130356	Cabarrus County Schools Virtual Academy	69	C	92.3	89.3	38.2

Public School Unit Code	Public School Unit Name	School Code	School Name	School Performance Grade Score	School Performance Grade	4-Year Cohort Graduation Rate	5-year Cohort Graduation Rate	Economically Disadvantaged Student Percentage
140	Caldwell County Schools	140313	Caldwell Online Academy	68	C	89.5	>95	58.5
190	Chatham County Schools	190309	Chatham County Schools Virtual Academy	51	D	*	72.7	57.1
230	Cleveland County Schools	230323	Cleveland Innovation	67	C	72.2	84	56.3
250	Craven County Board of Education	250379	Craven Virtual Academy	39	F	94.4	90.5	52.1
260	Cumberland County Schools	260460	Cumberland Virtual Academy 6-12	63	C	91.5	82.2	63.9
260	Cumberland County Schools	260461	Cumberland Virtual Academy K-5	48	D	*	*	77.4
300	Davie County Schools	300316	Davie County Virtual School	58	C	*	*	69.2
320	Durham Public Schools	320401	Ignite Online Academy	50	D	73.1	80.4	58.5
340	Winston Salem / Forsyth County Schools	340398	Virtual Academy	35	F	*	*	70.1
340	Winston Salem / Forsyth County Schools	340488	J F Kennedy High	60	C	84	81	72.8
360	Gaston County Schools	360550	Gaston Virtual Academy	62	C	76.3	75.4	59.5
390	Granville County Schools	390321	Granville Academy	54	D	93.1	90.9	35.7
410	Guilford County Schools	410302	Guilford eLearning University Prep	40	D	*	*	68.3

Public School Unit Code	Public School Unit Name	School Code	School Name	School Performance Grade Score	School Performance Grade	4-Year Cohort Graduation Rate	5-year Cohort Graduation Rate	Economically Disadvantaged Student Percentage
430	Harnett County Schools	430385	Harnett Virtual Academy	34	F	72	57.9	68.7
490	Iredell-Statesville Schools	490310	Career Academy and Technical School	65	C	87.1	>95	21.7
490	Iredell-Statesville Schools	490333	ISS Virtual Academy	60	C	82.4	85.3	34.7
510	Johnston County Public Schools	510365	JCPS Virtual Academy	NA	NA	74.5	79.6	49.5
560	Macon County Schools	560340	Macon Virtual Academy	82	B	81.8	93.8	55.6
600	Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools	600499	Charlotte-Mecklenburg Virtual School	72	B	93.2	>95	54.7
630	Moore County Schools	630399	Connect Academy	66	C	84.2	>95	31.6
640	Nash County Public Schools	640341	Nash Everywhere Digital Academy (NEDA)	50	D	84.2	>95	76.4
660	Northampton County Schools	660450	Northampton Virtual Academy	*	I	>95	>95	72.7
670	Onslow County Schools	670379	Onslow Virtual School	46	D	75.9	74	54.7
730	Person County Schools	730362	PCS Virtual Academy	76	B	>95	91.4	39.6
740	Pitt County Schools	740600	Pitt County Virtual	65	C	*	*	54.5
760	Randolph County School System	760385	The Virtual Academy at Randolph	38	F	*	*	68.6
800	Rowan-Salisbury Schools	800500	Summit Virtual Academy	44	D	82.6	*	69
840	Stanly County Schools	840366	Stanly County	27	F	79.2	78.9	47.6

| Public School Unit Code	Public School Unit Name	School Code	School Name	School Performance Grade Score	School Performance Grade	4-Year Cohort Graduation Rate	5-year Cohort Graduation Rate	Economically Disadvantaged Student Percentage
			Virtual Education					
860	Surry County Schools	860353	Surry Online Magnet School	65	C	>95	91.2	51.3
910	Vance County Schools	910369	Vance Virtual Village Academy	47	D	80	77.8	79.2
920	Wake County Schools	920386	Crossroads FLEX	92	A	>95	>95	6.3
950	Watauga County Schools	950334	Watauga Virtual Academy	64	C	*	*	46.7
980	Wilson County Schools	980500	Wilson Academy of Virtual Education	63	C	*	*	46.9

C. ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

Relationship Between SPG Scores and ED Students Served

Research consistently shows that student achievement is strongly correlated with socioeconomic status. Schools serving higher percentages of economically disadvantaged students (EDS) often have lower overall performance grades, even when those schools are making meaningful progress with their students. To account for this context, NCDPI estimated a simple ordinary least squares regression using data from 39 remote academies, with School Performance Grade (SPG) as the outcome and the share of Economically Disadvantaged Students (EDS%) as the sole predictor. This approach provides an expected SPG for each school given its poverty concentration and a residual for each school showing the gap between its actual SPG and what the model predicts for a school with the same EDS%.
As shown in Figure X, ***there is a clear negative relationship between a school's percentage of economically disadvantaged students and school performance grades*** within this set of remote academies. The relationship is statistically significant, explaining about 23% of the variation in SPG across schools. The solid line shows the model's expected SPG at each EDS level, indicating that a 10-percentage-point increase in EDS is associated with about a 5-point decrease in SPG scores.

Figure X. The Relationship Between Share of EDS and SPG Scores

Relationship between EDS and SPG
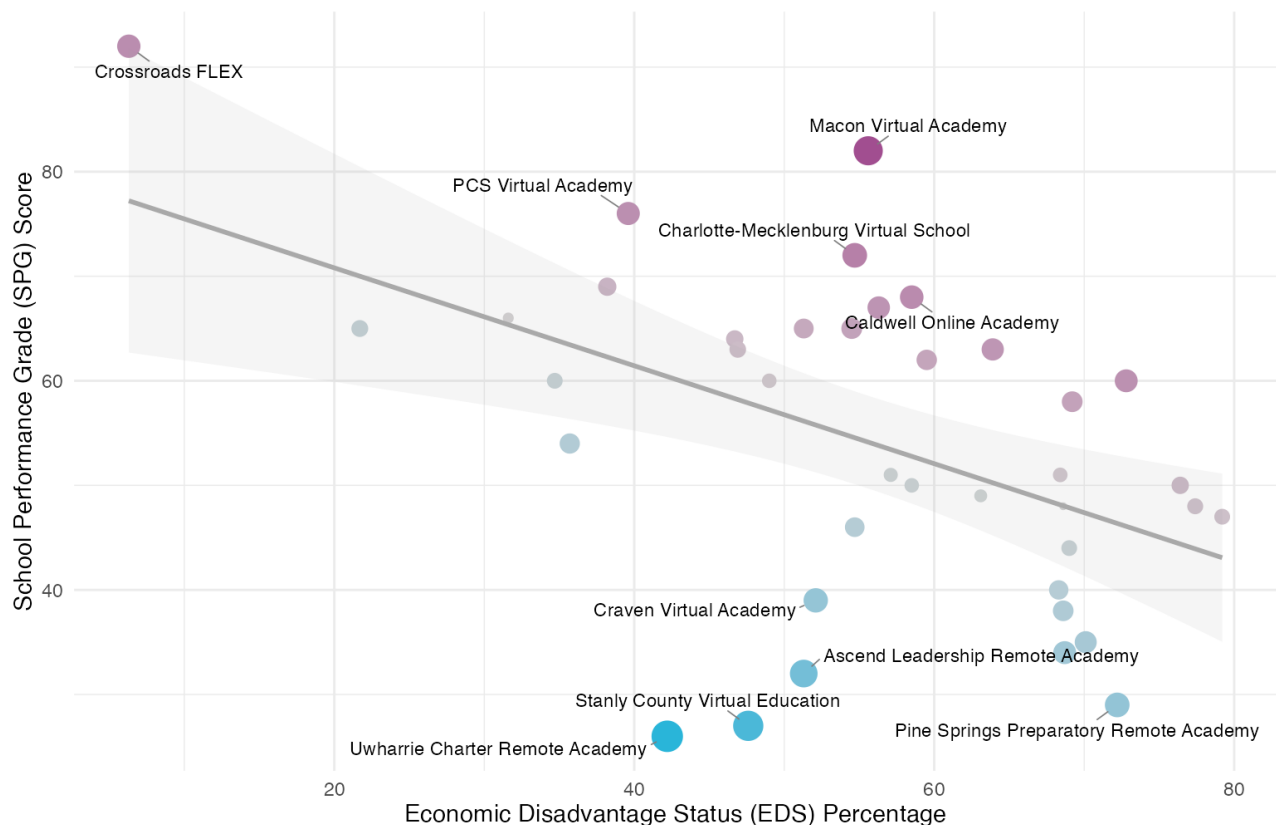
Note: The shaded band shows a 95% confidence band for the mean, not a prediction interval; many individual schools may reasonably fall outside this band.

The plotted schools and their relative size highlight largest gaps in predicted performance (i.e. residuals); purple points represent schools performing better than predicted on SPG based on EDS, while blue points represent those performing worse. Schools plotted close to the line are performing about as the model would expect given their EDS% and those that fall in the top and bottom residual quartiles are explicitly labeled (see Table X for full results). Analysis of these residuals highlights a few clear departures from a school's predicted performance based on EDS: Macon Virtual Academy appears roughly 28 points (about +2 SD) above its expected SPG score, while Uwharrie Charter Remote Academy (-34 points) and Stanly County Virtual Education (about -31 points) fall over 2 standard deviations below their expected score. Most other remote academies cluster within roughly ±1.5 SD of the fitted line, suggesting that performance is close to what the model would predict given their EDS%.

Among the remote charter academies, performance relative to expectation is mixed and generally lower than the district-run remote schools in this snapshot (see Table X). The North Carolina Cyber Academy and NC Virtual Academy perform at or very near the model's expectation given their EDS levels (residuals +2.9 and -0.1, respectively). By contrast, three charter-run programs fall well below model expectations: Pine Springs Preparatory Remote Academy (-17), Ascend Leadership Remote Academy (-24), and Uwharrie Charter Remote Academy (-34), all in the bottom residual quartile. No charter-run remote academy appears in the top quartile of positive residuals. Telra Institute Remote Academy and NE Carolina Prep School Remote Academy were not included in the current regression output, so their relative performance cannot be assessed here. As with the broader analysis, these comparisons reflect a simple model conditioning only on EDS%, so they should be treated as descriptive signals that warrant further instigation rather than determinations of effectiveness.

Limitations of the Analysis

Although the fitted model explains about 23 percent of the variation in SPG across schools, it's typical prediction error of about 14 SPG points, as well as the wide vertical spread of schools at similar EDS levels, underscores that ***although poverty concentration is strongly related to SPG, there remains considerable variation among remote academies that EDS alone does not explain***. Because the model includes only EDS% and the sample is modest, unmodeled school factors and statistical noise can influence a school's placement. Residuals should not be used as rankings and policymakers should avoid drawing strong conclusions about "above" or "below" expectations without considering additional evidence about school context and performance. While EDS% is meaningfully related to SPG, most of the differences among schools are driven by other factors outside this one measure.

This analysis relies on a single predictor and therefore does not account for other important differences among schools, such as prior performance, the balance of growth versus achievement within SPG, or the specific model of remote instruction. With a sample of 39 schools, individual schools with extreme values can also have outsized influence on the fitted line. The method also assumes a linear relationship and constant error variance across the EDS range, assumptions that may not hold perfectly in practice. Finally, SPG blends achievement and growth into one index, so this analysis cannot say which component is most related to poverty or most responsible for a school's residual.

Table X. Remote Academies Performance by Residual Quartiles

School Name	EDS %	Actual SPG	Predicted SPG	Residual
Q4 (Top 25%)				
Macon Virtual Academy	55.60	82.00	54.13	+27.87
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Virtual School	54.70	72.00	54.55	+17.45
Caldwell Online Academy	58.50	68.00	52.77	+15.23
Crossroads FLEX	6.30	92.00	77.22	+14.78
PCS Virtual Academy	39.60	76.00	61.62	+14.38
J F Kennedy High	72.80	60.00	46.08	+13.92
Cleveland Innovation	56.30	67.00	53.80	+13.20
Cumberland Virtual Academy 6-12	63.90	63.00	50.25	+12.75
Pitt County Virtual	54.50	65.00	54.65	+10.35
Davie County Virtual School	69.20	58.00	47.76	+10.24
Q3 (50-75%)				
Gaston Virtual Academy	59.50	62.00	52.31	+9.69
Surry Online Magnet School	51.30	65.00	56.15	+8.85
Cabarrus County Schools Virtual Academy	38.20	69.00	62.28	+6.72
Watauga Virtual Academy	46.70	64.00	58.30	+5.70
Nash Everywhere Digital Academy (NEDA)	76.40	50.00	44.39	+5.61
Wilson Academy of Virtual Education	46.90	63.00	58.21	+4.79
Cumberland Virtual Academy K-5	77.40	48.00	43.93	+4.07
Vance Virtual Village Academy	79.20	47.00	43.08	+3.92
North Carolina Cyber Academy*	68.40	51.00	48.14	+2.86
Q2 (25-50%)				

School Name	EDS %	Actual SPG	Predicted SPG	Residual
Buncombe County Schools Virtual Academy	49.00	60.00	57.22	+2.78
Connect Academy	31.60	66.00	65.37	+0.63
NC Virtual Academy*	68.60	48.00	48.05	−0.05
Alamance Virtual School	63.10	49.00	50.62	−1.62
Chatham County Schools Virtual Academy	57.10	51.00	53.43	−2.43
Ignite Online Academy	58.50	50.00	52.77	−2.77
Summit Virtual Academy	69.00	44.00	47.86	−3.86
ISS Virtual Academy	34.70	60.00	63.92	−3.92
Career Academy and Technical School	21.70	65.00	70.00	−5.00
Guilford eLearning University Prep	68.30	40.00	48.19	−8.19
Q1 (Bottom 25%)				
Onslow Virtual School	54.70	46.00	54.55	−8.55
Granville Academy	35.70	54.00	63.45	−9.45
The Virtual Academy at Randolph	68.60	38.00	48.05	−10.05
Virtual Academy	70.10	35.00	47.34	−12.34
Harnett Virtual Academy	68.70	34.00	48.00	−14.00
Craven Virtual Academy	52.10	39.00	55.77	−16.77
Pine Springs Preparatory Remote Academy*	72.20	29.00	46.36	−17.36
Ascend Leadership Remote Academy*	51.30	32.00	56.15	−24.15
Stanly County Virtual Education	47.60	27.00	57.88	−30.88
Uwharrie Charter Remote Academy*	42.20	26.00	60.41	−34.41

*Designates Remote Charter Academy

D. RETENTION & ATTENDANCE

Discuss trends in student retention and attendance across remote academies. Note any issues with data availability or comparability.

School Name	Final ADM 2025	Daily Attendance Rate 2025	Chronically Absent Rate 2024	Chronically Absent Rate 2025
State Total	1,516,282	92.55	24.96	24.26
North Carolina Cyber Academy	2,442	95.41	0.00	18.41
NC Virtual Academy	3,474	100.00	0.00	0.00
Alamance Virtual School	200	93.25	18.97	22.55
Buncombe County Schools Virtual Academy	319	91.86	38.40	28.37
Burke Virtual Academy		0	8.33	0.00
Cabarrus County Schools Virtual Academy	117	95.06	15.84	14.79
Caldwell Online Academy	152	95.22	38.67	18.56
Chatham County Schools Virtual Academy	11	100.00	3.57	0.00
Cleveland Innovation	190	98.34	4.85	4.78
Craven Virtual Academy	117	99.56	9.74	2.07
Cumberland Virtual Academy 6-12	384	95.99	10.59	14.86
Cumberland Virtual Academy K-5	162	91.26	23.48	32.77
Davie County Virtual School	26	96.82	7.32	11.11
Ignite Online Academy	337	91.87	32.93	32.81
North East Carolina Preparatory School Remote Academy	2	100.00	0.00	*
Virtual Academy	186	89.58	30.45	39.35
J. F. Kennedy High School	305	90.41	39.38	35.85
Gaston County Schools Virtual Academy	259	95.46	12.46	15.44
Granville Academy	207	89.95	2.92	33.33
Guilford eLearning University Prep	273	92.46	26.09	28.67
Harnett Virtual Academy	95	84.13	30.20	54.10
Career Academy and Technical School	107	99.01	2.78	0.83
Iredell-Statesville Schools Virtual Academy	127	99.11	4.85	3.98
JCPS Virtual Academy	209	95.70	23.62	15.97
Ascend Leadership Remote Academy: Lee County	34	90.20	0.00	40.43
Macon Virtual Academy	40	89.34	26.15	48.53
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Virtual 4-12 School	577	97.33	12.64	10.74
Telra Institute Remote Academy	1	100.00	0.00	0.00
Connect Academy	284	97.83	7.61	6.98
Nash Everywhere Digital Academy (NEDA)	161	91.76	10.07	32.65
Northampton Virtual Academy	11	100.00	30.00	0.00
Onslow Virtual School	406	93.16	23.44	22.87
Person County Schools Virtual Academy	46	98.25	13.33	3.51
Pitt County Virtual	39	93.05	18.52	22.81

School Name	Final ADM 2025	Daily Attendance Rate 2025	Chronically Absent Rate 2024	Chronically Absent Rate 2025
The Virtual Academy at Randolph	99	92.78	18.92	23.89
Uwharrie Charter Remote Academy	112	100.00	0.00	0.67
Summit Virtual Academy	330	89.00	46.15	46.05
Stanly County Virtual Education	60	99.97	0.00	0.00
Surry Online Magnet School	115	98.83	7.03	3.85
Vance Virtual Village Academy	126	79.93	43.88	62.50
Crossroads FLEX	132	96.98	30.14	4.96
Pine Springs Preparatory Remote Academy	2,136	98.62	0.00	8.28
Watauga Virtual Academy	12	86.02	5.71	50.00
Wilson Academy of Virtual Education	36	98.57	18.87	12.50

E. HIGH SCHOOL METRICS (GRADES 9–12 ONLY)

Provide high school completion and dropout rates. Identify patterns or anomalies in outcomes.

School Name	HS Dropout Rate 2024
State Total	1.88
North Carolina Cyber Academy	0.00
NC Virtual Academy	0.00
Alamance Virtual School	2.38
Buncombe County Schools Virtual Academy	1.55
Burke Virtual Academy	0.00
Cabarrus County Schools Virtual Academy	0.00
Caldwell Online Academy	5.49
Chatham County Schools Virtual Academy	0.00
Cleveland Innovation	7.07
Craven Virtual Academy	7.41
Cumberland Virtual Academy 6-12	0.39
Cumberland Virtual Academy K-5	0.00
Davie County Virtual School	0.00
Ignite Online Academy	5.17

School Name	HS Dropout Rate 2024
North East Carolina Preparatory School Remote Academy	*
Virtual Academy	0.00
J. F. Kennedy High School	2.22
Gaston County Schools Virtual Academy	4.03
Granville Academy	4.12
Guilford eLearning University Prep	0.00
Harnett Virtual Academy	13.51
Career Academy and Technical School	0.00
Iredell-Statesville Schools Virtual Academy	8.51
JCPS Virtual Academy	5.53
Ascend Leadership Remote Academy: Lee County	*
Macon Virtual Academy	4.17
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Virtual 4-12 School	0.00
Telra Institute Remote Academy	*
Connect Academy	2.48
Nash Everywhere Digital Academy (NEDA)	4.30
Northampton Virtual Academy	0.00
Onslow Virtual School	6.69
Person County Schools Virtual Academy	0.00
Pitt County Virtual	0.00
The Virtual Academy at Randolph	0.00
Uwharrie Charter Remote Academy	*
Summit Virtual Academy	0.00
Stanly County Virtual Education	2.99
Surry Online Magnet School	1.54
Vance Virtual Village Academy	6.42
Crossroads FLEX	0.00
Pine Springs Preparatory Remote Academy	*
Watauga Virtual Academy	0.00
Wilson Academy of Virtual Education	3.23

F. RECOMMENDATIONS

As this is the first year of evaluation for Remote Academies and Remote Charter Academies, the following points are intended as constructive feedback rather than prescriptive recommendations. They highlight observations from the performance data that may guide ongoing reflection, local decision-making, and future state-level support.

1. **Interpreting Performance in Context**
   a. Schools serving higher percentages of economically disadvantaged students generally posted lower School Performance Grades (SPG). At the same time, some academies performed better than expected, while others fell well below predicted levels. Identifying and sharing effective practices from schools exceeding expectations may help inform improvement strategies for others.

2. **Attendance and Student Engagement**
   a. Daily attendance rates were strong overall, yet chronic absenteeism varied widely across schools. This variation suggests that some academies may have developed promising approaches to maintaining student engagement, which could be documented and shared more broadly.

3. **Graduation and Dropout Patterns**
   a. Most remote academies reported low dropout rates, but several showed higher-than-average levels. Understanding what differentiates schools with stronger persistence outcomes may provide insights into program design, student supports, and early intervention strategies.

4. **Variability Across Schools**
   a. The regression analysis indicates that while poverty concentration explains part of the variation in SPG, many other factors contribute to differences in outcomes. Further exploration of instructional models, support systems, and staffing structures may help clarify what drives success in remote settings.

5. **Building a Longitudinal Picture**
   a. This first-year snapshot provides only a baseline. As additional years of data are collected, trends in performance, attendance, and student outcomes will become clearer. Establishing consistent data reporting across schools will strengthen future analyses and provide more actionable insights for both policymakers and practitioners.