

April 12, 2016

## **DEAR PARENTS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS:**

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We are pleased to present you with the Annual Education Report (AER) which provides key information on the 2014-15 educational progress for the Great Lakes Cyber Academy (GLCA). The AER addresses the complex reporting information required by federal and state laws. The school's report contains information about student assessment, accountability, and teacher quality. If you have any questions about the AER, please contact Ms. Heather Ballien, GLCA Principal, for assistance.

The AER is available for you to review electronically by visiting the following [website](http://www.connectionsacademy.com/michigan-cyber-school): (<http://www.connectionsacademy.com/michigan-cyber-school>) or you may review a copy in GLCA's main office.

Two key challenges presented themselves throughout the 2014-15 school year. First, based on MME state testing results, we continue to lag behind state averages in the area of mathematics. Scantron testing throughout the school year also supported that students enrolled with significant mathematics skill gaps. Second, time on task data shows that we have students who are not taking full advantage of the instructional opportunities provided: LiveLesson sessions, one-on-one contacts with teachers, and full attendance in classes. Closing these gaps to meet proficiency levels expected on state testing and maximize all students' potential is being addressed through the following initiatives: 1) a robust system of intervention supports addressing both academic skill deficiencies and the development of productive learning strategies to enhance the ability for the student to benefit from multiple resources for the support of learning, 2) a homeroom system that provides a single point of contact teacher to ensure that students' needs are being addressed in a timely fashion; and 3) targeted in-person instructional sessions scheduled throughout the state to allow students the opportunity to get additional support from their teachers in person. Through these initiatives we are aiming to reduce student truancy by elevating their engagement with coursework and contact with teachers. In doing so we are better able to address academic skill

deficiencies students may need assistance with in order to help them maximize their potential and reach their educational goals.

State law requires that we also report additional information:

## 1. PROCESS FOR ASSIGNING PUPILS TO THE SCHOOL

### Enrollment Cap and Lottery

Great Lakes Cyber Academy is a tuition-free online public charter school open to students in the state of Michigan. The school had an enrollment cap of 650 students for the 2014-15 school year. Students were enrolled on a first come/first served basis until all spaces are filled. If the cap is met, students are placed on a waiting list once all enrollment tasks are completed and then released to enroll as space becomes available. Students are encouraged to complete all enrollment tasks as soon as possible to avoid needing to be placed on a waiting list.

The school's enrollment policy and process can be found on the [Enroll tab of the school's website](#).

## 2. THE STATUS OF THE 3-5 YEAR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

A copy of the school improvement plan is available at Great Lakes Cyber Academy. The Great Lakes Cyber Academy School Improvement Plan is on track, meeting all requirements for establishing goals and monitoring progress.

## 3. A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF EACH SPECIALIZED SCHOOL

Great Lakes Cyber Academy (GLCA) is a free online public school (cyber charter) serving students in grades 9–12 throughout Michigan, and offers three graduation pacing options. The school, which opened for the 2013-14 school year, is authorized by Central Michigan University. Using the award-winning Florida Virtual School and Connections Academy curricula, GLCA offers a robust selection of core courses, including AP® and Honors courses, that are designed to help students gain the knowledge and thinking skills they need for life, work, and higher education.

At GLCA, students, teachers, and families are all partners in the Personalized Performance Learning® (PPL) approach. Together, they develop an instructional plan tailored to each student’s academic abilities. The program and goals are adjusted as needed to ensure the student is learning and growing at GLCA. Teachers, students, and families monitor the plan and the student’s progress throughout the year, aided by GLCA’s powerful Education Management System (EMS) known as Connexus®.

GLCA students have three flexible graduation pacing options that make it possible to focus on personal interests—or to accelerate studies and graduate early:

### **Standard Pace**

Students take a full course load in the fall and spring sessions.

### **Extended Pace**

Students take fewer courses than a typical course load in the fall and spring sessions, but also attend the summer session. This track provides students with more time for other activities throughout the traditional school year, while still completing a full work load over the course of the year.

### **Accelerated Pace**

Students attend fall, spring, and summer sessions full-time, enabling them to graduate early or take post-secondary dual enrollment courses.

GLCA’s mission is to help each student maximize his or her potential and meet the highest performance standards through a uniquely individualized learning program. We believe that every student has unique talents, goals, and learning preferences. That’s why we deliver an online learning program that’s tailored to each student’s abilities, interests, and learning styles.

## **4. IDENTIFY HOW TO ACCESS A COPY OF THE CORE CURRICULUM**

### **A DESCRIPTION OF ITS IMPLEMENTATION AND AN EXPLANATION OF THE VARIANCES FROM THE STATE’S MODEL**

Great Lakes Cyber Academy courses are offered throughout the year—during the fall, spring and summer sessions – providing students three flexible graduation pacing options for meeting state

education standards. The [curriculum](#) and information can be found on the [school's website](#) (<http://www.connectionsacademy.com/michigan-cyber-school/curriculum/high-school-courses.aspx>).

GLCA is a virtual school, so rather than working in a traditional brick and mortar classroom setting, students, families/Learning Coaches, and teachers all access curriculum and communicate with one another via Connections Academy's secure education management system known as Connexus. Connexus is one of the most comprehensive, reliable, and user-friendly online learning systems available. This proprietary system, designed from the ground up to meet the exact requirements of the Connections instructional model and the needs of our students and families, brings the school right to students 24 hours a day from any Internet connection. Connexus is powerful, yet very intuitive and user-friendly. It is also comprehensive, allowing students, parents, and educators to access everything they need from one place.

### Tools for Parents and Learning Coaches



From their personalized home page, parents can:

- View all students' schedules, assignments, and lessons.
- Adjust the learning schedule for students in grades K-8.
- Monitor students' progress using the online grade book.
- Record attendance.
- Communicate with teachers and other families via our secure WebMail and message boards.
- Rate the Connections Academy learning experience, at any time.

## Tools for Students

The student's individualized home page helps students communicate, organize, and complete and submit assignments. From the homepage, they can:

View daily and monthly schedules and access lessons.

- Monitor progress through the online grade book (for students in grade 6 and above).
- Communicate with teachers and students through WebMail and message boards.
- Access many online learning resources.
- Participate in clubs and activities.
- View a directory of students.

## Tools for Teachers and Administrators

Connexus is used extensively by teachers and administrators. Some of the many tools for teachers allow them to:

- Conduct lessons live over the Internet with [LiveLesson®](#) sessions.
- Track student progress.
- Review and grade online assignments and assessments.
- Communicate quickly and effectively with students, parents, and Learning Coaches.
- Keep track of student and family interactions.
- Modify learning to meet students' needs

Because much of the learning and record-keeping is done online through Connexus, school administrators can monitor the effectiveness of instruction and assure students are making progress, every day.

# 5. THE AGGREGATE STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT RESULTS

## FOR ANY LOCAL COMPETENCY TESTS OR NATIONALLY NORMED ACHIEVEMENT TESTS

Great Lakes Cyber Academy (GLCA) measures gains in student achievement by utilizing a pretest/posttest model requiring students to take Scantron® Performance Series™ Assessments.

The program consists of two parts, Reading and Mathematics. GLCA students in grades 9-10 take these tests three times throughout the school year (fall, winter, and spring). Results below are for students who completed both a Scantron Performance Series Pretest and a Posttest for a given subject.

## Scantron Performance Series

Results below are for students who completed both a Scantron Performance Series Pretest and a Posttest for a given subject.

*SIP = Standard Item Pool.*

SIP percentages are an estimate of the probability of a student correctly answering each item within the item pool for his/her enrolled grade for that test subject.

*“Maintaining or Improving”*

The percentage of students who improved at least one Scantron performance band from pretest to posttest or maintained a performance band value of High Average or Above Average from pretest to posttest.

Performance band values were calculated by Connections Academy based on a student’s scale score value compared to Scantron normative data for Fall and Spring Scale Score Inter-Quartile Ranges. Possible performance band values are: Below Average, Low Average, High Average, and Above Average.

## Scantron Reading Results

The table below provides a breakdown of the number of students taking the pretest, posttest, and the pretests and posttests by grade for school year **2013-14**.

Grade	Reading Pretest Takers	Reading Posttest Takers	Reading Pretest AND Posttest Takers
9	29	53	11
10	49	38	10
11	30	30	8

The table below provides a breakdown of the number of students taking the pretest, posttest, and the pretests and posttests by grade for school year **2014-15**.

Grade	Reading Pretest Takers	Reading Posttest Takers	Reading Pretest AND Posttest Takers
9	143	124	76
10	119	126	70

The table below gives the median reading pretest and posttest SIP score for school year **2013-14**. Only students that took both the pretest and posttest were included in the calculations.

Grade	Median Reading Pretest SIP Score	Median Reading Posttest SIP Score
9	80	84
10	81	78
11	78	71

The table below gives the median reading pretest and posttest SIP score for school year **2014-15**. Only students that took both the pretest and posttest were included in the calculations.

Grade	Median Reading Pretest SIP Score	Median Reading Posttest SIP Score
9	84	84
10	84	83

The table below shows the percent of students scoring at each Performance Band Value level for school year **2013-14**. Again, only students that took both the pretest and posttest were included in the calculations.

Performance Band	Percent Reading Pretest	Percent Reading Posttest
Above Average	48%	33%
High Average	25%	32%
Low Average	15%	22%
Below Average	12%	13%

The table below shows the percent of students scoring at each Performance Band Value level for school year **2014-15**. Again, only students that took both the pretest and posttest were included in the calculations.

Performance Band	Percent Reading Pretest	Percent Reading Posttest
Above Average	55%	43%
High Average	14%	20%
Low Average	18%	20%
Below Average	13%	17%

### Reading Satisfactory Progress

For these assessments, we define Satisfactory Progress as a student who has improved at least one Scantron performance band from pretest to posttest or has maintained a performance band value of “High Average” or “Above Average” from pretest to posttest.

The percentage of students making reading satisfactory progress for school year **2013-14** in each grade as well as overall is presented in the table below. Only students that took both the reading pretest and posttest assessments were included in the analysis.

Grade	Reading Satisfactory Progress %
9	82%
10	70%
11	75%
<b>Overall</b>	<b>76%</b>



The percentage of students making reading satisfactory progress for school year **2014-15** in each grade as well as overall is presented in the table below. Only students that took both the reading pretest and posttest assessments were included in the analysis.

Grade	Reading Satisfactory Progress %
9	67%
10	61%
Overall	64%

### Scantron Math Results

The table below provides a breakdown of the number of students taking the pretest, posttest, and the pretests and posttests by grade for school year **2013-14**.

Grade	Math Pretest Takers	Math Posttest Takers	Math Pretest AND Posttest Takers
9	24	50	9
10	36	38	10
11	27	22	6

The table below provides a breakdown of the number of students taking the pretest, posttest, and the pretests and posttests by grade for school year **2014-15**.

Grade	Math Pretest Takers	Math Posttest Takers	Math Pretest AND Posttest Takers
9	153	134	76
10	119	145	68

The table below gives the median math pretest and posttest SIP score for school year **2013-14**. Only students that took both the pretest and posttest were included in the calculations.

Grade	Median Math Pretest SIP Score	Median Math Posttest SIP Score
9	28	42
10	32	41
11	40	37

The table below gives the median math pretest and posttest SIP score for school year **2014-15**. Only students that took both the pretest and posttest were included in the calculations.

Grade	Median Math Pretest SIP Score	Median Math Posttest SIP Score
9	37	34
10	42	45

The table below shows the percent of students scoring at each Performance Band Value level for the math pretest and posttest for school year **2013-14**. Again, only students that took both the pretest and posttest were included in the calculations.

Performance Band	Percent Math Pretest	Percent Math Posttest
Above Average	18%	24%
High Average	13%	22%
Low Average	38%	24%
Below Average	30%	31%

The table below shows the percent of students scoring at each Performance Band Value level for school year **2014-15**. Again, only students that took both the pretest and posttest were included in the calculations.

Performance Band	Percent Math Pretest	Percent Math Posttest
Above Average	23%	27%
High Average	31%	35%
Low Average	28%	17%
Below Average	19%	21%

### Math Satisfactory Progress

For these assessments, we define Satisfactory Progress as a student who has improved at least one Scantron performance band from pretest to posttest or has maintained a performance band value of “High Average” or “Above Average” from pretest to posttest.

The percentage of students making math satisfactory progress in each grade for school year **2013-14** as well as overall is presented in the table below. Only students that took both the math pretest and posttest assessments were included in the analysis.

Grade	Math Satisfactory Progress %
9	67%
10	50%
11	N/A
<b>Overall</b>	<b>59%</b>

The percentage of students making math satisfactory progress in each grade for school year **2014-15** as well as overall is presented in the table below. Only students that took both the math pretest and posttest assessments were included in the analysis.

Grade	Math Satisfactory Progress %
9	43%
10	59%
<b>Overall</b>	<b>50%</b>

## Combined Report Data

Please click the following link, [GLCA Combined Report](https://goo.gl/3p2a8d), (<https://goo.gl/3p2a8d>) which contains the required reportable information as required by the U.S. Department of Education. The “Combined Report” provides detailed data on state administered student assessment results, accountability results, teacher qualification information and the state results for the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP). This report in combination with this cover letter meets the requirement for reporting to parents and communities in an annual education report.

## 6. IDENTIFY THE NUMBER AND PERCENT OF STUDENTS REPRESENTED BY PARENTS AT PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

2013 – 2014 School Year: 180 (99.4%)

2014 – 2015 School Year: 412 (99.8%)

## 7. FOR HIGH SCHOOLS ONLY ALSO REPORT ON THE FOLLOWING:

a. The number and percent of postsecondary enrollments (Dual Enrollment)

2013 – 2014 School Year: 4 students

2014 – 2015 School Year: 5 students

b. The number of college equivalent courses offered (AP/IB)

2013 – 2014 School Year: 16 AP courses offered

2014 – 2015 School Year: 25 AP courses offered

c. The number and percentage of students enrolled in college equivalent courses (AP/IB)

2013 – 2014 School Year: 6 students enrolled in AP courses totaling 7 classes

2014 – 2015 School Year: 19 students enrolled in AP courses totaling 9 classes

d. The number and percentage of students receiving a score leading to college credit.

2013 – 2014 School Year: 2 students received credit.

2014 – 2015 School Year: 5 students received credit

GLCA is delighted to bring a new model for virtual schooling to the students of Michigan. In our second year of operation we have enjoyed continued growth and the opportunity to serve a number of parents and students seeking options and choice. Results from our parent satisfaction survey indicate that 93% of our families are satisfied with our school. A number of parents and students have expressed to us the difference our educational model has made for them; students are finding success where there had once been failure. It is our continued endeavor to provide options and opportunities for students in Michigan, helping them meet their educational needs and goals. We strive to provide quality programming in all we offer and appreciate the continued support of our parents, staff, and greater school community in these efforts.

Sincerely,

Heather Ballien

Principal,

Great Lakes Cyber Academy