

NEWS RELEASE

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“TRECA Digital Academy Makes Biggest Academic Gain in School History”

MARION, Ohio (08-15-2006) – In a time when education is of major concern to most Americans, more and more students are achieving success by learning online.

It’s happening at TRECA Digital Academy (TDA), Ohio’s only nonprofit online school for students in grades K-12, which climbed to “Continuous Improvement” on the state academic grade-card ladder.

The Ohio Department of Education (<http://www.ode.state.oh.us/>) released state report cards to the public earlier today.

“This is huge progress for us, especially since we’re an online school,” explains Mike Carder, executive director at TRECA, TDA’s parent organization (www.tdaonline.org), headquartered in Marion. “Our 2,500 students live all over the state of Ohio. And they take all of their classes online from their computer at home.”

ODE requires that students who attend an online school be tested at a secure test site, using pencil and paper – not a computer.

“So as you can see, just getting our students tested was a monumental task,” he added.

Haven Shelton, TDA Central Ohio K-8 regional director, and a former teacher at Wooster City Schools, was up to the challenge.

“Our teachers and staff logged more than 16,600 miles to administer these tests at 70 different sites in every corner of Ohio,” she explained, noting that ODE also requires that a certified teacher be present to administer each and every student test.

The results were worth the effort, TDA officials said, as more than 98% of students who were required to take state achievement tests did so.

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“Transportation, or lack thereof, is a real concern for many of our students,” Shelton pointed out. “So to have nearly every student take the tests was a major accomplishment in and of itself.”

TDA officials were justifiably pleased with this year’s test scores, which reflected the biggest academic improvement in the school’s five-year history.

“Our greatest gains were in math, reading and writing,” Carder noted. “Our faculty and staff have worked together all year to help students perform well on these tests. We’re continuing to evaluate what worked well and where we can improve so we can carry this momentum into the next school year.”

Shelton attributes some of the improvements to the following: incorporating Web-based test prep software and problem-solving games into subject matter at all grade levels; increased parental involvement; and a staff of fully certified teachers “who are willing to go the extra mile to help our students.

“And we can’t forget the kids,” she added. “They worked hard, too, and it shows.”

For more information about TDA and to determine if online learning is right for your student, go to www.tdaonline.org or call 888-828-4798.

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7 Tips to Help Your Online Student Succeed on State Achievement Tests*

1. Check daily to be sure s/he is keeping up on homework assignments.
2. Let your student be the technology expert – have them teach you how to use e-mail, iPods, etc., – so you can keep up with them.
3. Practice problem-solving techniques from Web-based software: the games are fun – and educational.
4. Utilize sample achievement test questions offered by your child’s teacher and discuss answers together.
5. Take advantage of your school’s online resources for personalized help with a difficult subject.
6. Communicate, communicate, communicate – with your child, his/her teacher(s), and school officials. Never be afraid to ask questions.
7. Praise your child with mini rewards – extended “free” time, sharing and gathering favorite sites/music with an iPod, or a simple hug and “I’m proud of you.”

* Source: Haven Shelton, Central Ohio K-8 regional director, TRECA Digital Academy