



April 1, 2019

Dear Parents and Community Members:

We are pleased to present you with the Annual Education Report (AER) which provides key information on the 2017-18 educational progress for the Great Lakes Cyber Academy. 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 Heather Ballien, Superintendent, for assistance.

The AER is available for you to review electronically by visiting our school website, [www.greatlakescyberacademy.com](http://www.greatlakescyberacademy.com), or you may review a copy in the main office at your child's school.

For the 2017-18 school year, schools were identified using definitions and labels as required in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). A Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI) school is one that has at least one underperforming student subgroup. An Additional Targeted Support (ATS) school is one that has three or more underperforming student subgroups. A Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) school is one whose performance is in the lowest 5% of all schools in the state or has a graduation rate at or below 67%. Some schools are not identified with any of these labels. In these cases, no label is given.

\* Note TSI and ATS definitions were changed for the 2018-19 school year per federal requirements. The new definitions are:

TSI – The school has at least one subgroup performing in the bottom 25% within each applicable accountability index component.

ATS – The school has met the criteria for TSI identification and has at least one subgroup performing at the same level as a CSI school.

Our school was identified as a Comprehensive Support and Improvement school solely due to our 4 year graduation rate.

Two key challenges presented themselves during the 2017-18 school year: continuing to raise academic achievement scores, especially math and reading, and reducing truancy rates. Based on both our state testing results and our ongoing formative assessment (NWEA MAP) information, math continues to be a focus academic area, as it continues to be the lowest performing area. In order to continue working toward closing the achievement gap, the following initiatives were supported: 1) a robust system of intervention supports through our MTSS (Multi-Tier System of Supports); 2) PLC (Professional Learning Community) teams focused on addressing identified school and district goals for improving processes and outcomes for students; and, 3) an engagement specialist pilot focused on increasing student

participation. Through these initiatives, we aimed to enhance both student engagement with the learning process, as well as outcomes for students raising academic achievement and increasing overall graduation rates. All initiatives were geared toward addressing our mission of maximizing student potential.

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 1,100 students, with a maximum of 850 students at the high school level, for the 2017-18 school year. Students were enrolled on a first come/first served basis until all spaces are filled. Once the cap was met, students were placed on a waiting list once all their enrollment tasks were completed and released to enroll as space became available. Students were 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 at [Great Lakes Cyber Academy Enrollment](#).

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

A copy of the school improvement plan is available at the main offices of Great Lakes Cyber Academy or online at [www.greatlakescyberacademy.com](http://www.greatlakescyberacademy.com). The Great Lakes Cyber Academy School Improvement Plan is on track, progressing with 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 6–12 throughout Michigan, and offers three graduation pacing options for high school students. The school, which opened to grades 9-12 in the 2013-14 school year, is authorized by Central Michigan University. Grades 6-8 were added in the 2016-17 academic year. Using the award-winning Connections Academy curricula, GLCA offers a robust selection of core courses, including AP® and Honors or Gifted & Talented, 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 high school 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.

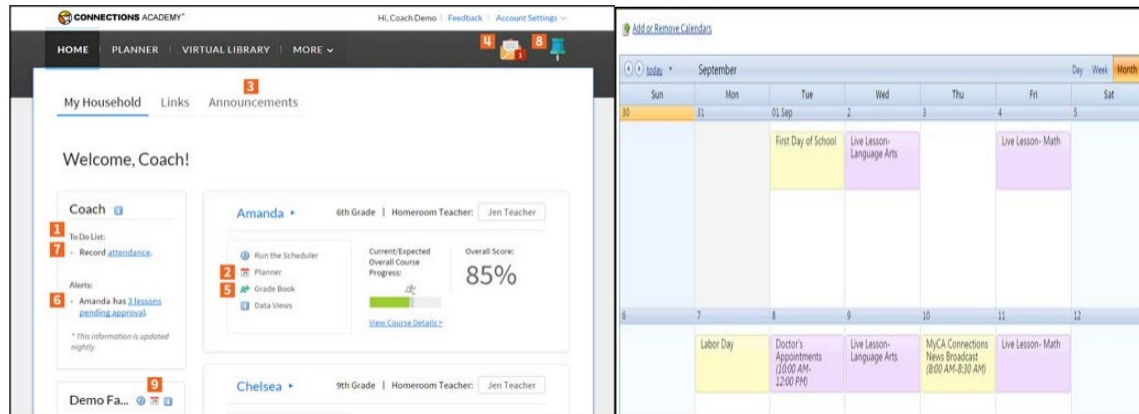
GLCA’s mission is to help each student maximize his or her potential and meet the highest performance standards through a uniquely individualized learning program. We believe that every student has unique talents, goals, and learning preferences. That’s why we deliver an online learning program that’s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

#### 4. CORE CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION

Great Lakes Cyber Academy courses are offered throughout the year—during the fall, spring and summer (high school only) semesters – 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.greatlakescyberacademy.com) (www.greatlakescyberacademy.com).

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 6–8.
- 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. AGGREGATE STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

During the 2016-17 school year, GLCA transitioned to the Northwest Evaluation Association Measures of Academic Progress, or NWEA MAP, growth assessments. The NWEA MAP assessments were given twice throughout the school year (fall and spring). Results below are for students who completed both the fall and spring MAP tests in grades 6-11.

### NWEA MAP Growth Assessments, 2016-17

Results below are for students who completed both a fall and a spring NWEA MAP Interim Assessment for a given subject. MAP Growth reports help teachers and administrators track a student's progress over the course of their education, throughout the school year and into subsequent years. By monitoring a student's progress and gains, or losses, in their achievement, teachers and administrators are able to make decisions about individual student's instructional needs, aiding them in pinpointing instructional needs to help ensure that students continue to gain skills along the way.

### NWEA MAP Growth Summary Results – Reading

The table below provides a breakdown of the number of students taking the fall and spring assessments by grade for 2016-17 school year.

Grade	Fall Test Takers	Spring Test Takers	Fall AND Spring Takers
6	12	21	9
7	27	52	19
8	45	64	34
9	119	134	76
10	153	135	103
11	163	158	112

The table below gives the mean reading fall and spring RIT (Rausch Unit) score for the 2016-17 school year for all students tested.

Grade	Mean RIT Fall Score	Mean RIT Spring Score
6	205.4	205
7	212.6	215.9
8	218.2	216.6
9	222.6	220.4
10	224.3	222.4
11	229.5	227.8

The table below shows the percent of students scoring at each Percentile Band Value level for the 2016-17 school year. Only students that took both the fall and spring assessments were included in the calculations.

Grade	Lo %ile <21	LoAvg %ile 21-40	Avg %ile 41-60	HiAvg %ile 61-80	Hi %ile >80
6	38%	24%	19%	10%	10%
7	24%	22%	22%	16%	18%
8	28%	9%	16%	28%	19%
9	24%	16%	13%	21%	25%
10	22%	12%	13%	24%	28%
11	16%	12%	18%	23%	32%

### NWEA MAP Growth Summary Results – Math

The table below provides a breakdown of the number of students taking the fall and spring assessments by grade for 2016-17 school year.

Grade	Fall Test Takers	Spring Test Takers	Fall AND Spring Takers
6	12	21	9
7	27	51	19
8	48	67	34
9	111	128	74
10	148	137	104
11	154	148	104

The table below gives the mean reading fall and spring RIT (Rausch Unit) score for the 2016-17 school year for all students tested.

Grade	Mean RIT Fall Score	Mean RIT Spring Score
6	209.4	214.4
7	215.9	223.9
8	225	223.6
9	226.3	226.1
10	230	231.9
11	235.6	235

The table below shows the percent of students scoring at each Percentile Band Value level for the 2016-17 school year. Only students that took both the fall and spring assessments were included in the calculations.

Grade	Lo %ile <21	LoAvg %ile 21-40	Avg %ile 41-60	HiAvg %ile 61-80	Hi %ile >80
6	33%	29%	14%	19%	5%
7	31%	25%	15%	13%	15%
8	34%	13%	16%	16%	22%
9	36%	21%	13%	19%	11%
10	20%	21%	21%	19%	19%
11	16%	20%	22%	25%	17%

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### NWEA MAP Growth Summary Results – Reading

The table below provides a breakdown of the number of students taking the fall and spring assessments by grade for 2017-18 school year.

Grade	Fall Test Takers	Spring Test Takers	Fall AND Spring Takers
6	18	33	15
7	59	83	45
8	117	137	92
9	183	190	142
10	179	166	126
11	165	169	122

The table below gives the mean reading fall and spring RIT (Rausch Unit) score for the 2017-18 school year for all students tested.

Grade	Mean RIT Fall Score	Mean RIT Spring Score
6	217.1	218.4
7	209.5	212.4
8	217	214.3
9	217.7	219.8
10	222.4	219.9
11	221.2	220.1

The table below shows the percent of students scoring at each Percentile Band Value level for the 2017-18 school year. Only students that took both the fall and spring assessments were included in the calculations.

Grade	Lo %ile <21	LoAvg %ile 21-40	Avg %ile 41-60	HiAvg %ile 61-80	Hi %ile >80
6	12%	9%	33%	18%	27%
7	31%	14%	27%	12%	16%
8	31%	16%	21%	17%	15%
9	24%	15%	19%	18%	24%
10	22%	19%	17%	22%	20%
11	23%	17%	18%	22%	20%

## NWEA MAP Growth Summary Results – Math



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Grade	Fall Test Takers	Spring Test Takers	Fall AND Spring Takers
6	18	33	15
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The table below gives the mean reading fall and spring RIT (Rausch Unit) score for the 2017-18 school year for all students tested.

Grade	Mean RIT Fall Score	Mean RIT Spring Score
6	212.7	220.0
7	214.5	218.4
8	222.5	222.0
9	222.6	226.0
10	228.5	227.3
11	212.9	235.6

The table below shows the percent of students scoring at each Percentile Band Value level for the 2017-18 school year. Only students that took both the fall and spring assessments were included in the calculations.

Grade	Lo %ile <21	LoAvg %ile 21-40	Avg %ile 41-60	HiAvg %ile 61-80	Hi %ile >80
6	30%	18%	24%	18%	9%
7	42%	19%	20%	12%	6%
8	38%	26%	15%	12%	9%
9	30%	23%	16%	21%	10%
10	27%	23%	19%	16%	14%
11	28%	18%	19%	19%	16%

## Combined Report Data

Please click the following link, [GLCA Combined Report](http://bit.ly/2u1hvw3), (http://bit.ly/2u1hvw3), 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. NUMBER AND PERCENT OF STUDENTS REPRESENTED BY PARENTS AT PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

2016 – 2017 School Year: 792 (92.8%)  
2017 – 2018 School Year: 854 (95.8%)

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

#### a. THE NUMBER AND PERCENT OF POSTSECONDARY ENROLLMENTS (DUAL ENROLLMENT)

2016 – 2017 School Year: 16 students (2% of students in grades 9-12)  
2017 – 2018 School Year: 7 students (1% of students in grades 9-12)

#### b. THE NUMBER OF COLLEGE EQUIVALENT COURSES OFFERED (AP/IB)

2016 – 2017 School Year: 25 AP courses offered  
2017 – 2018 School Year: 30 AP courses offered

#### c. THE NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS ENROLLED IN COLLEGE EQUIVALENT COURSES (AP/IB)

2016 – 2017 School Year: 83 students enrolled in AP courses  
2017 – 2018 School Year: 81 students enrolled in AP courses

#### d. THE NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS RECEIVING A SCORE LEADING TO COLLEGE CREDIT

2016 – 2017 School Year: 4 students, 57% of students taking AP tests earned credit  
2017 – 2018 School Year: 3 students, 38% of students taking AP tests earned credit

GLCA is delighted to bring a new model for virtual schooling to the students of Michigan. In our fifth 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 2017-18 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 R Ballien*

Heather Ballien,  
Superintendent