

By providing the flexibility needed to balance education with other vital pursuits, PA Cyber prepares students for life in college and beyond.

**F**OR PROFESSIONAL SYNCHRONIZED ICE SKATER LAURA NOLAN, balancing school and competition has always been extremely important.

Just before starting high school, she approached her parents with an idea: to attend an online public school that could give her the flexibility to keep up with her studies while simultaneously pursuing her athletic endeavors.

“We were very hesitant at first,” recalls Laura’s mother, Kellie Nolan, “but she argued her case and we decided to give it a try.”

Through their research, the Nolans came across the Pennsylvania Cyber Charter School, also known as PA Cyber, an online public school headquartered in Midland, Pennsylvania, near Pittsburgh. With its combination of live and self-paced classes, PA Cyber turned out to be a perfect match for Laura. She graduated from PA Cyber in 2023 with an exemplary grade-point average and plans to study nursing in college.

“It was such a stress reliever to find a school that would give me the flexibility to focus on both skating and my education,” says Laura.



Attending PA Cyber gave Nolan the flexibility to keep up with her studies while competing as a professional ice skater.



PA Cyber graduate Laura Nolan (center) with her family at commencement

# Perfect Balance

“I didn’t have to worry about missing classes or making up work while I was traveling for competitions, and I received a lot of support from my teachers.”

PA Cyber gave Nolan the ability to access recordings of any classes she missed. It also allowed her to take tests while traveling and to attend from competitions, rather than having to reschedule the tests once she returned.

“I liked having slideshows of the presentations that I missed in class and not having to write physical notes all the time, which really helped when it came to studying,” says Laura. “It was also great to be able to make my own schedule and stay on track with my school assignments.”

Cyber schools have become increasingly popular among athletics-focused students like Laura. Such schools also appeal to students who are working while going to school, have medical conditions that may affect their attendance, or have other special needs, as well as those who are simply looking for a more flexible and personal approach to learning.

“A lot of people confuse cyber schools with homeschooling,” says Kellie. “PA Cyber is a true online school, with structured classes and certified teachers, in addition to academic advisors that were extremely supportive and helpful. In addition, attending a cyber school did not mean Laura was isolated. She was

required to participate in group assignments and interacted with her classmates on a regular basis to put together presentations and complete projects.”

All of PA Cyber’s teachers are Pennsylvania certified public-school teachers, and the school is accredited by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools. Since opening its doors in 2000, the school has graduated more than 21,000 students. In addition to its Midland headquarters, the school has nine regional offices throughout the state where students can attend orientations and participate in in-person programs. PA Cyber is one of the oldest online schools in the state, with a yearly enrollment in kindergarten through 12th grade of about 11,000 students. The school enrolls students from all 500 of Pennsylvania’s public-school districts.

PA Cyber offers more than 450 unique courses. In addition, the school offers students hundreds of in-person social opportunities, such as field trips, music lessons, art and STEM workshops, parties and proms, and graduation ceremonies.

“I don’t feel like I missed out on any opportunities by attending a cyber school,” says Laura. “It allowed me to get a good education and fulfill my dream of becoming a professional skater and competing for Team USA. My teachers were very supportive and were always excited to hear about my competitions. I feel like I’m well prepared for the next chapter of my life at college and beyond.” ■

## Pennsylvania Cyber Charter School

For more information about the Pennsylvania Cyber Charter School, call (888) 722-9237 or visit [pacyber.org](http://pacyber.org).