



Adrienne Hayward with her children, Dallas and Deionna, both of whom are PA Cyber students

Checking All the Boxes

Embracing full-time remote learning through **PA Cyber** has helped a local family flourish.

The COVID-19 pandemic put every American family off-balance, some more than others. For Adrienne Hayward, a single mother of two children, the threat of the pandemic led to a profound change in how and where both of her children—son Dallas and daughter Deionna—received their education.

“They were enrolled in the Philadelphia public school system when the pandemic hit, and they had to go virtual like everyone else,” says Hayward, whose family lives in the Delaware County borough of Sharon Hill. “As they were preparing to go back [into the classroom], I felt the school wasn’t taking precautions I was comfortable with. I’m a federal employee and I was virtual, so why shouldn’t

PA Cyber in 2021.

“The pandemic forced this upon us,” Hayward says. “It was a bittersweet, scary situation. Luckily, my kids fell in love with virtual learning. They were happy that they didn’t have to go back into a traditional classroom. As a side benefit, the change has also led to more family time.”

they do the same? I started thinking: *I need to find another way.*”

Her solution: migrating her children over to a virtual school for full-time remote learning. In the process of researching virtual schools with a local presence, she discovered The Pennsylvania Cyber Charter School—PA Cyber, for short—and quickly found that the school “checked all the boxes.” She enrolled her kids in

PA Cyber’s flexible scheduling enables Hayward’s children to complete their studies in ways that help each of them learn best. Hayward says Deionna, now 12, likes to start the school day early, while Dallas, now 13, is “more of an afternoon person.” The school also caters to each child’s unique interests and learning styles; Deionna has a love of languages—she’s currently learning German—and the ambition to one day work as a prosecutor, while Dallas has a keen interest in robotics and envisions a career in engineering. Dallas had some early developmental delays, but his mother is happy to say he is now flourishing thanks to interventions such as speech therapy.

While academic achievement is the central priority at PA Cyber, the school also offers enrichment opportunities apart from the curriculum. Hayward says both of her children enjoy participating in many of the in-person social activities and events held at PA Cyber’s regional office in Springfield.

“PA Cyber does a magnificent job of making sure the kids have a social life apart from what they’re doing academically,” she adds. “They do an amazing event called the Sneaker Ball, which is kind of like a mini-prom where the kids get all dressed up and get together with their classmates, and they can even bring friends from outside school. They also have things like Tie-Dye Day, which is a lot of fun. They do all kinds of things like that, which you wouldn’t necessarily think of for a cyber school.”

More than five years have passed since the pandemic’s early days. The threat may have abated, yet Hayward sees no need to change course in terms of her family’s school choice.

“My aim is to stick with PA Cyber,” she says. “I am in awe of how much [my kids] have learned and grown, how they have been encouraged to do new things; I can’t say that fully about their experience in public school, not that their experience there was bad. These days I joke with [my kids], telling them, ‘If you don’t act properly, you’re going to go back to [your old] school.’”

“My kids can’t say enough about PA Cyber,” she continues. “They really enjoy everything about it.” ■

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Pennsylvania Cyber Charter School

For more information about Pennsylvania Cyber Charter School, call (888) 722-9237 or visit PACyber.org.