

Growing by 'Leaps and Bounds'



Starting this year, all four of Chelsea and Daniel Kenner's sons will be educated through PA Cyber.

In their search for a disruption-free education that effectively prepares their sons for the future, a Bucks County couple chooses **PA Cyber**.

All four Kenner boys had positive experiences at Quakertown Elementary School in Bucks County, but their parents, Chelsea and Daniel Kenner, wanted to see if they could find an even better educational fit for their children—one free of classroom drama and disruptions.

Chelsea's oldest son, Colton, transitioned to a virtual classroom cultivated by The Pennsylvania Cyber Charter School, also known as PA Cyber, three years ago. Brother Greysen followed suit two years later. When the new school year begins at summer's end, Colton will enter 10th grade at PA Cyber, while Greysen will enter eighth grade.

"I had some concerns going into it, because any change can be a hurdle," Chelsea says. "From the very beginning, [Colton's] academic advisors, teachers, and everyone else with PA Cyber have been super involved and informative.

It's been fairly seamless. Colton had a couple of learning curves because it was a lot of responsibility on his plate—the same with my second child—but both have been doing well after the initial change."

PA Cyber's asynchronous learning model has helped Colton and Greysen make academic gains, while also making strides in terms of emotional maturity and independence. With their mother's at-home oversight and guidance from members of PA Cyber's staff, Colton and Greysen have both "taken ownership of their education and grown by leaps and bounds," Chelsea says.

Besides boasting a strong academic program, PA Cyber strives to provide students with the same kinds of experiences they would have at a traditional brick-and-mortar school. This includes opportunities to gain hands-on experi-

ence, be exposed to potential career pathways, and build skills that will serve them in the future, whether they decide to go to college or enter the workforce immediately after graduation. As one example, PA Cyber students have access to STEM-based learning experiences, technical instruction, and mentoring opportunities through partnerships with more than a dozen colleges and universities across the country.

Both of Chelsea's older sons, particularly Colton, have begun thinking about life beyond high school.

"[Colton] has a strong interest in flight school and being a flight instructor," she adds. "From the time they were two years old, both Colton and Greysen have been learning from us, and they seem to have a broader sense of what the real world and the workforce look like. Because of PA Cyber, they're learning about their interests and strengths so they can have an idea of what they can do with their talents in the future."

The only drawback of a virtual classroom, as Chelsea sees it, has to do with her sons' social lives.

"I have a couple of social butterflies, so they definitely miss the friends they've made [at school] over the years, dating back to kindergarten," she says. "Socialization outside of school has become a priority for us. We've had to make sure they have social interactions with their peers. We're also going to try to get them more involved in activities that take place [at PA Cyber's regional office] in Allentown this year."

The experience has been so positive that Chelsea's two youngest sons, Braeden and Austin, will be joining their older brothers at PA Cyber—Braeden entering seventh grade and Austin going into fifth.

When asked if she has any regrets about her children migrating to PA Cyber, she's quick to respond: "Honestly, I couldn't name one."

"I haven't seen anything with Colton where I've felt like this isn't going to work out," she adds. "That's why the three others are following in his footsteps. We've been beyond thrilled with the amount of flexibility and help the boys get and the changes we've see in them growth-wise. I believe it's one of the better decisions we've made so far.

"Once someone feels the need or desire to make that change, whether it's a parent or a child, it's worth experiencing it," she continues. "The school districts like to hold on to children, so if you ever decide to go the virtual route and notice one of the kids needs to go back to a brick-and-mortar school, the schools will be happy to take them back. I don't foresee that being an issue for us." ■

The Pennsylvania Cyber Charter School

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