

March 2nd, 2012

Dear Mr. Corbett,

I'd like to take this opportunity to share with you my thoughts and observations on your Online program as my daughter, [REDACTED], took online PE first semester this school year. Although many students are opting to take online course, this was our first experience with such a course.

First and foremost, the online PE allowed [REDACTED] to do her course work anytime anywhere. This was a tremendous blessing as she is a competitive swimmer, heading to Junior Nationals in Orlando in 10 days, and spends her afternoons and early evenings in the pool. [REDACTED] was able to do her work evenings and weekends in large and small time allotments. This flexibility afforded her the privilege of creating her own schedule. During the fall sports season, when high school swim takes place, [REDACTED] never had to miss a 6th period lecture, class discussion or assessment when attending an away meet. She loved not getting behind...and also taking a quick nap before practice on some days!

[REDACTED] was expecting to just log in her hours of swim each day and call it good. However, she found that online PE required her to analyze not only her activity needs, however, also her personal nutritional requirements. I thought including the family health history was a valuable piece as well. Keeping track of her food consumption and tracking her nutrient intake opened [REDACTED]'s eyes to the importance of eating a balanced meal and what, in addition, she needed as an athlete. As an old home economics major in college, I was thrilled to see her evaluating the foods she [REDACTED] was asked to do and on several occasions she talked of her progress toward meeting her goals. The course content has designated learning goals but allowed [REDACTED] to tailor the learning to herself.

Although this was an online course, [REDACTED] was able to communicate with her teacher, Tanya Huber, anytime she wanted. Blackboard and email were the main ways she talked to her teacher. Blackboard was also great for reading other students' comments and ideas. I appreciated the connect ed calls and the weekly face-to-face instruction at Jackson that [REDACTED] could access if she needed. [REDACTED] even received emails during Winter Break and snow days encouraging her to get ahead or caught up with any missing assignments. That is unique to online. I really appreciated Tanya's help when I had questions about [REDACTED]'s progress. I emailed my concerns and she quickly responded. In fact, I discovered that during Districts and State competitions she was not logging in as much as she should and Tanya was able to send me a report detailing the frequency and duration of [REDACTED]'s work online. Despite the fact she got a 98% in the class, she was a bit surprised when I called her on her "lack thereof". I loved having that information and felt I was in touch with her level of participation; much different than in a regular classroom.

Now that [REDACTED] has taken one online course she wants to take more. Even tonight talking about next year's registration, she said she wants to take two classes online. When I asked her why she replied with an answer I hadn't expected..."because I can have a one-on-one discussions with my teacher whenever I want to".

It did take a few times of logging in for [REDACTED] to really understand the format of the course online. I think she had anticipated a quick and simple intro and then dive into her work. However, she had to spend a few frustrating moments figuring out the system. But once she got the hang of how to manipulate the materials she was off and running. Again, from a parent perspective, I felt I was able to be in greater contact and tracking of her progress and the expectations of the course.

I'm sure there are other parents who would echo my words. I believe you have designed a well structured program with the needed supports for both the student and parents. Thank you for creating a alternative learning option for [REDACTED] and other students.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

(An Everett School District Parent)