

Georgia Cyber Academy (Formerly GA Virtual Academy); Summary of Information

Current Issues in Georgia

Posted by:

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Is Georgia Virtual Academy a Home Study Program as Defined by Georgia Law?....NO!

GEORGIA VIRTUAL ACADEMY (NOW "GEORGIA VIRTUAL ACADEMY")
SUMMARY OF INFORMATION GATHERED SO FAR BY HEIR of Georgia
SEPTEMBER 11, 2007

As the new school year begins, we are all faced with new decisions and new choices. This year a new educational choice was presented that had not existed before, the GEORGIA VIRTUAL ACADEMY. In order to make informed decisions and opinions, members of the HEIR community have been researching the Georgia Virtual Academy. Below is summarized information from various members of the HeirTalk Yahoo Group. You may have already seen it from various members if you are on the list. You will also find a copy of an email from Shannon Kimball, State Board of Education and her contact information.

FROM THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION AND ODYSSEY SCHOOL:

● Georgia Virtual Academy is NOT A HOME STUDY program. It is a PUBLIC SCHOOL program. Parents of students who are enrolled in Georgia Virtual Academy should NOT submit Declaration of Intent to Utilize a Home Study Program or monthly attendance forms to the local school board.

● Georgia Virtual Academy is NOT the same as the Georgia Virtual School.

● Georgia Virtual Academy currently enrolls only grades K-8, but hopes to add high school later.

● Georgia Virtual Academy students are a part of a brick and mortar public charter school in Coweta County

● Georgia Virtual Academy is NOT free. It is paid for by state tax money. The cost of each enrolled student is \$3800-\$4300 depending on the student.

● All federal entitlements also go with the student to the GVA program.

● A student enrolled in Georgia Virtual Academy is not enrolled in the local school system. He/she is enrolled in a statewide attendance zone. There is no local money attached to the student.

● Local schools are NOT required to allow a Georgia Virtual Academy student to participate in local school activities, classes, or extracurricular activities. GVA student participation is at the discretion of the local school.

● Georgia Virtual Academy did not exist until July, 2007.

● If parents enroll their child in Georgia Virtual Academy and then decide the program is not suitable for their child, then the parents must withdraw the student from the program formally and enroll the child into another educational program.

● This year due to the late appearance of the program, the school calendar is slightly more flexible with the later start date. Next year students enrolled as Georgia Virtual Academy students in this program will be required to follow the school year calendar of the Odyssey School in Coweta

County.

• Students enrolled in the Georgia Virtual Academy use the K12 curriculum.

• Students enrolled in the Georgia Virtual Academy are subject to the rules, regulations, and testing that public school students are subject to. Testing requirements include the CRCT and any standardized testing.

• Georgia Virtual Academy marketing is being directed at homeschoolers first because of the popularity of the K-12 curriculum within the homeschool community.

• The number of students enrolled so far has exceeded expectations. Original projections were that about 500 students would be enrolled. More than 1000 students have enrolled, and many more inquiries were being made toward the end of August.

FROM COMMUNITY MEMBERS WHO ATTENDED GVA ORIENTATION PROGRAMS:

• Georgia Virtual Academy teachers work from their homes.

• Georgia Virtual Academy parents of enrolled students are referred to as “learning coaches” not home educators or teachers.

• The student:teacher ratio is 60:1.

• The students are tested at the beginning of each school term to determine what curriculum level is needed for the student.

• Adding the K12 high school program depends on a few years of successful operation of Georgia Virtual Academy as a K-8 program.

• Presenters of the programs about the Georgia Virtual Academy and K12 curriculum are emphatic that this is NOT a home study program. It is some parents who are mistakenly calling this homeschool.

• Georgia Virtual Academy students must be available to teachers at certain times during each week. Study hours are otherwise flexible as long as the 4.5 hours per day, 180 days per year are met. Teachers maintain the appropriate state records, monitor student progress, organize field trips and social outings, direct students to nationwide competitions.

• Testing is administered at sites outside the home.

LETTER FROM SHANNON KIMBALL, GA DOE CHARTER SCHOOL DIVISION:

At its July meeting, the Georgia State Board of Education approved an amendment to the charter of Odyssey School, a publicly funded state-chartered special school located in Coweta County, to create a program of the charter school, the Georgia Virtual Academy (GVA). The GVA is a virtual charter school, providing a full-time, comprehensive academic program of K-8 virtual instruction in partnership with K12, Inc., a virtual curriculum provider.

Students enrolling in the Georgia Virtual Academy program are full-time public school students enrolled in Odyssey School. As a result, home school students choosing to enroll in the Georgia Virtual Academy would become public school students enrolled in Odyssey School, which is its own local school system. Furthermore, students leaving any other school system to enroll in Odyssey's GVA will be treated as transferring from one Georgia public school to another in a different school system.

GVA is a program separate from, and unaffiliated with, the Georgia Virtual School. The Georgia Virtual School is an education initiative of the Georgia Department of Education that provides a wide variety of online core curricular, AP, and elective courses to public, private, and home school

students at the high school level.

For more information about Odyssey School and the Georgia Virtual Academy, please visit the following links:

[Odyssey School](#)

[K12 Georgia Virtual Academy](#)

For more information about the Georgia Virtual School, please visit the following link: [Georgia Virtual School](#)

If you have additional questions, please contact the Charter Schools Division at 404-657-0515.

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