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Contact: Sharon Williams
(610) 230–0783
swilliams@agora.org

Agora Cyber Charter School Opens Philadelphia Learning Center
Innovative Blended Learning Program combines online learning and face-to-face instruction

PHILADELPHIA—Agora Cyber Charter School, one of the state’s largest public cyber schools, today celebrated the grand opening of its innovative new learning center in Philadelphia.

The event included Agora families, teachers, staff, and members of the school’s board of directors. Special guests included members and staff of the Pennsylvania General Assembly, including state representative Paul Clymer, chairman of the House Education Committee.

Parents and students toured the facility and learned about the additional academic programs and services that will be offered at the new learning center. Families also participated in school-sponsored activities for students of all ages.

“We are extremely delighted to add another level of academic services for our students living in Philadelphia, said Sharon Williams, Head of School for Agora Cyber Charter School. “Our new learning center will offer best practices in blended learning, using engaging web-based courses and instructional techniques that focus on the education needs of every child. It will provide students with the flexibility they desire, while offering them increased attention and teacher-led support in subjects where they need extra help.”

The Agora Learning Center is the cyber school’s first significant blended learning program. It will be open five days a week and will serve about 200 students in grades 3-12 who live primarily in the Philadelphia school district. Education at the center will focus primarily on remediation opportunities for students in math and language arts.

The center will feature learning labs outfitted with interactive whiteboards, state-of-the-art technology, and online lessons from the award-winning K12 curriculum. The center will provide small group classroom-based instruction with teachers, and personalized one-on-one learning opportunities. Students will be benefit from a highly individualized learning experience with student-to-teacher class size ratios no greater than 15 to 1.

Throughout the year the Agora Learning Center will be used to offer additional academic programs and workshops for parents and learning coaches. It will also host school events and extra-curricular activities. The cyber school plans to open more hybrid learning centers throughout the state.

After touring the Agora Learning Center and speaking to Agora’s families and staff, Representative Clymer said, “I am impressed with what I saw. The learning process is very
effective and the instructors here are certainly dedicated to the school and to meeting the expectations of the parents. I am very pleased I was here today to talk to the students and see the new concepts and new facility Agora has provided for the children of Philadelphia.”

Agora Cyber Charter School serves over 6,000 full time students in grades K-12 across Pennsylvania. The public school operates through a partnership with Agora’s independent, non-profit board of directors and K12 Inc., America’s largest provider of online school programs for students in kindergarten through high school.

“For years, K12 has been developing and implementing best practices in blended online learning for students across the U.S.,” said Williams. “Now Agora will offer what we believe will be a superb, one-of-a-kind blended learning model for our students. We are excited about its potential and believe it will have an immediate impact on student achievement.”

Blended learning is one of the most exciting areas within the growing field of online education. In a 2010 national report titled, Keeping Pace with K-12 Online Learning, blended learning was singled out for its potential to increase student engagement and learning, develop 21st Century skills, and enhance the personalized learning experience for students. A 2009 report by the U.S. Department of Education concluded that online learning and blended learning models are more effective at raising student achievement than face-to-face instruction alone.

Agora Cyber Charter School is one of the fastest-growing and most popular public school options in the state. Agora uses the K12 curriculum, which combines including online lessons and offline materials, along with powerful technology, to connect students, teachers and staff all across the state in a vibrant and effective school community. Students access their lessons from home, or anywhere an Internet connection can be found, and work with much greater flexibility than is possible in traditional schools. Agora’s state-certified teachers – all highly skilled and trained under K12’s nationally acclaimed online teacher training programs – provide instruction and support, and regularly interact with students and parents via email, web-based classrooms, online discussions, phone, and face-to-face meetings.

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