ATMS student reaches Achieve 3000 pinnacle

Tawasha receives all-time high for the world

BY DEBBIE HIGHTOWER

TRINITY — An eighth-grader from Archdale-Trinity Middle School recently received world status.

Jesse Tawasha achieved an unprecedented score of 5,801 in Achieve 3000, a cloud-based activity that delivers nonfiction reading and writing activities tailored to each student’s Lexile reading level.

“I’m an avid reader,” said Tawasha, who enjoys reading science, science fiction and graphic novels outside class time. “I just go online and do it. You read articles and answer the questions. Not all the answers are in the article. You have to think about it.”

According to ATMS lead teacher Mark Dougherty, reading is the cornerstone for success in other academic areas. Achieve 3000 provides tools for students to steadily increase their ability to read, comprehend, apply and communicate information derived from selected texts.

“The Achieve 3000 articles are content related to curriculum areas such as science, math and physical education,” he said. “There are thousands of articles that are updated weekly.”

Articles specifically target each student’s Lexile level in order to be challenging. Students receive points for every article they read provided they score 75 percent or better on the questions that follow. Responses may include multiple choice answers, written replies or a sequencing activity.

Although they log on and work independently on Achieve 3000, teachers and administrators are able to closely monitor students’ progress. Parents may also access the information through the Parent Portal.

Dougherty said the Lexile reading score of middle school students is assessed at the beginning of the school year and again at mid-year to monitor their progress.

According to the Achieve 3000 website, the Lexile reading level of the average high school graduate is 910-1210, which is insufficient for most jobs.

According to Tawasha during his top-scoring week he read 50 articles in one day. His Achieve 3000 screen sent him a message that read “All time high for the world!”

ATMS language arts and social studies teacher Stephanie Williams

During a press conference in the ATMS media center, lead teacher Mark Dougherty smiles in the background as Jesse Tawasha proudly displays the message informing him of worldwide top scorer status.

Tawasha described how Tawasha’s enthusiasm infected other students.

“It was cool because this became a goal for him that kept growing once he achieved daily top scorer for the state and then the daily top scorer worldwide,” she said. “He was on fire and decided to go for the week. It was really fun every day to see where he was going. Consequently, the excitement spilled over and many of the students dominated top scoring positions the entire week.”

Tawasha’s parents, Jack and Lisa Tawasha, his grandparents, Jameelah Tawasha and Anne and Richard Taylor, are all proud of his achievements. Tawasha’s notification also stated that he will receive a folding chair among other prizes.

Tawasha, who wants to be an experimental physicist or a reconstructive plastic surgeon, is already reading at a 1500 Lexile, which is a college reading level.

An avid video gamer, Tawasha said Achieve 3000 requires more effort, but believes it will help him achieve his career goals.

“On Friday I did more than 50 in one day,” said Tawasha. “I think I’m going to back off for a while, though.”

Principal Todd Beane wasn’t really surprised when he received notification of the world status of Tawasha, whose name appears on the school honor roll. “We’re extremely proud of Jesse and his achievements,” said Beane. “He is extremely well-mannered as well as passionate about his studies. I wish I had 800 more students like him.”

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