Online school provides option for local students

BY LOUISE R. SHAW
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DAVIS COUNTY — Add yet another thing to the growing list of what can now be done with the help of a computer. Besides reading books, getting news, having conversations, sending photos and finding old friends, it’s now even more possible to go to school online.

DeLaina Tonks, director of Open High School of Utah, visited the Clipper offices recently to share information about the virtual school, which first began operations in 2009 and was awarded “Best of State” for their curriculum development last year.

“It really empowers the student to take control of their education,” said Tonks. “They really thrive with twenty-first century options.”

Tonks described today’s students as being “letting kids living in a Flintstones era,” and said that the new format allows students individual attention but also a lot of flexibility.

About 30 of the Utah school’s 400 students are from Davis County.

Some students, she said, may choose to participate online rather than at a brick and mortar school due to a travel schedule resulting from their involvement in ballet or acting or athletics.

Some students attend due to health reasons such as migraines, or perhaps because they were teased or bullied in school. Others choose the option because they are advanced and prefer to work at a faster pace.

Hallie Maxwell, a junior from Layton, was home-schooled for two years and then enrolled at Open High as a result of bullying.

“Ballet was something that I really loved, and my parents saw that it was a positive environment,” Maxwell said.

Maxwell described her experience at Open High as being “like having your own private tutor.”

“Making them the first second of the student. Most of the

teachers go out of their way to create a curriculum from the ground up to meet the student’s needs,” said Tonks.

“More information is available at www.openhigh-school.org.

Sara Hicks and (front row, from left) Shelby Furubayashi, Taylor Beard, Ashaura Castel! and Hannah Rose. Joyce Brimley was also named as teacher of the month.