

Case Study

Barnsdall High School

BARNSDALL, OK

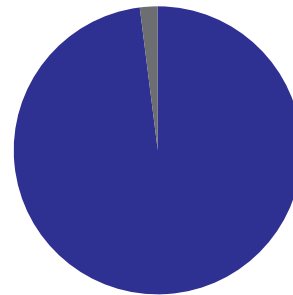
How can online learning help high-achieving students in a small school district?

Challenge: A small high school with too few teachers to accommodate high-achieving students.

Solution: An online alternative, allowing middle school students testing above grade level to complete higher-level math coursework.

Outcome: 94 percent pass rate in higher-level math end-of-year standardized tests.

School Demographics



■ Caucasian	98%
■ Hispanic	2%
Low Income	57%

Background

With 400 students in grades K–12, Barnsdall Public Schools is located in a small town in rural Oklahoma.

The district strives “to prepare every student for success after graduation,” and faces many similar struggles as small school districts nationwide. Perhaps its most significant challenge comes in the form of Barnsdall’s highest achieving students; with such a small number of students overall, there simply aren’t enough teachers to meet the needs of those students who are performing above grade level.

Barnsdall Junior/Senior High School serves the district’s 200 7th through 12th grade students in a single building with 15 full-time faculty members. While the majority of the 8th graders in Barnsdall are in remedial math, a small percentage perform above grade level in math. A pilot program was developed to place these high-performing students in Algebra I using Edgenuity.



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Sayra Bryant, Principal, Barnsdall High School

Helping All Students Achieve Success

Early in the 2011–2012 school year, Principal Sayra Bryant noticed that a small group of students in the 8th grade math class were outperforming their peers. “They ran the risk of becoming bored with the curriculum, and the school did not have enough teachers to create a separate class for these five students,” Principal Bryant explains. As a former Online Education Coordinator, she recognized the possibilities inherent in online learning, and the students who were scoring above grade level in math were placed in the 9th grade coursework—Algebra I—using Edgenuity.

“Edgenuity gave us the chance to serve every student, even our most advanced,” Principal Bryant says of the pilot program. “I wanted every high-performing student to have the opportunity to try his or her hardest. I wanted them to push themselves. Edgenuity helped with that.” Students were placed in a 55-minute computer lab during their math class, where they worked on the Edgenuity Algebra I curriculum. Their math teacher oversaw their work, and was able to provide extra, in-person support when necessary.

Impressive Results

During the pilot year (2011–2012), students were tested at the end of the year with a goal of scoring at least 50 on the Edgenuity diagnostic test. When all five students passed the Algebra I End of Instruction (EOI) test, two with a perfect score, Principal Bryant knew she was on to something.

In the 2012–2013 year, six 8th grade students were placed in a blended Algebra I class—in-person coursework supplemented with 55 minutes of Edgenuity curriculum. In the spring, 100 percent of students scored “advanced” on the Algebra I EOI at the end of the semester.

In the 2013–2014 school year, five high-achieving 8th graders were joined by seven struggling ninth graders in the Barnsdall blended Algebra I class. At the end of the year, 80 percent of 8th graders and 71 percent of 9th graders passed the Algebra I EOI test.

Staff Buy-in and Student Agency

When asked about the biggest challenge of implementing the Edgenuity Algebra I program for 8th grade students, Principal Bryant is clear: “The whole staff has to buy in to the program and see that it is helping all our students.” The blended learning structure of Edgenuity gives math teachers time to remediate with the students who need help, while challenging those students who might finish work early or grow bored with the coursework offered because of how advanced they are.

“Teachers recognized quickly that the program is not replacing teachers; it’s helping teachers. They’re still the experts.” Principal Bryant says. “As a district, we need a curriculum with integrity and rigor, and teachers can use Edgenuity to build a curriculum that is strong and meets the standard of rigor for *all* our kids...that’s what makes the program successful.”

What’s more, the 8th graders in Barnsdall enjoy working with Edgenuity because it offers them several entry points to access Algebra I. “They might hear an idea in class in one way, and then hear it a second way online. Sometimes that’s all it takes to make the concept accessible,” Principal Bryant says. The dedicated computer time also helps give students agency and ownership of their learning. “Kids can talk to each other and ask about the concepts,” she says. “I watch them argue the problems with each other, work together to get the answers and, most importantly, help each other master new skills. Edgenuity provides an environment where there is meaningful discussion in the class and individual learning for each student, all with the careful support of a teacher.”

