

Success Story

Milwaukee Public Schools

MILWAUKEE, WI

Grades: K–12

Reach: 160 schools and over 77,000 students in total

Model: Credit recovery, accelerated learning, and alternative education programs

Impact: Increased graduation rates

Creative Credit Recovery

Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS) needed creative credit recovery solutions for their students. They wanted to provide additional options to high school students who had failed classes in the traditional classroom and allow them to stay with their cohort and graduate on time. Most credit recovery was happening after school or on the weekends, but schools that were offering options during the school day were 2.5 times more successful, so they made a change district-wide in 2014. Students are benefitting from the change because it gives them a different way to learn.

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WHY IS THERE A NEED FOR CREATIVE CREDIT RECOVERY SOLUTIONS?

Sandy Schroeder, Manager of Extended Learning at MPS, recognizes that there is a psychological component that negatively affects students when they have to retake a class in a traditional classroom, and can hold students back from succeeding. And having to sit through the entire class again in the same way they did before with no success can further discourage students. “Students learn in different ways, and Edgenuity® allows them to interact with the content in a different way,” she points out. MPS has also enabled pretesting on their online courses, which allows students to prove their knowledge of each unit and skip the units they have already mastered, which helps motivate them to keep working.



BEYOND CREDIT RECOVERY

After using Edgenuity Courseware™ for several years, MPS administrators were looking for more ways to incorporate the platform into their educational program. They started using MyPath™ for math and reading intervention with all of the middle and high school students. They also started a Saturday academy to provide additional opportunities to students for recovery. After a successful first year, the Saturday academy expanded to include students interested in acceleration, too. With this change, more underclassmen are attending Saturday academy, and most of the acceleration credits were even earned by incoming freshmen who wanted to have some credits under their belt before starting high school. And with the district's new graduation requirements, Schroeder and her team are considering offering language classes on Saturdays as well, along with Edgenuity's new electives and other options for high-flying students.

“ [Personalized evaluations help] build a college mindset where students develop their own plans to allocate time to study, take effective notes, and stay focused.

HOW HAS THE TEACHER'S ROLE CHANGED?

“We know that Edgenuity helps students be successful, but the relationship with the teacher is most important,” said Schroeder. In fact, they carefully select the staff members in charge of the credit recovery labs because of the personalized student relationships required there. Teachers use the data to evaluate a student's progress and discuss a path forward. This helps to build what they call a “college mindset” where students develop their own plans to allocate time to study, take effective notes, and stay focused. All of the teachers were trained by Edgenuity professional development specialists, so they understand how to leverage the data within the system for student success. In their relationships with the students, teachers help to break the work into weekly segments and analyze the data to meet goals and coach students through course completion.

WHAT'S BEEN THE IMPACT?

These creative credit recovery and acceleration options have led to over 1,800 course completions in the 2014–2015 school year, 3,700 in 2015–2016, and 5,700 in 2016–2017. By emphasizing the interpersonal skills and leveraging Edgenuity's professional development options, teachers are working with students in new and effective ways throughout the district.

