

Case Study

Phoenix Union High School District

PHOENIX, AZ

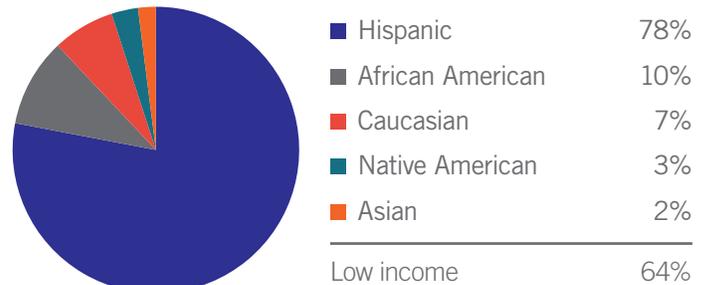
Is a customized interactive recovery program feasible in a large urban school district?

Problem: Students in math courses were failing to keep up with the curriculum.

Solution: An Edgenuity online concept recovery program broke the cycle of low math achievement.

Outcome: Targeted instruction helped diverse learners improve their grades and take more advanced courses.

School Demographics



Background

The Phoenix Union High School District (PUHSD) has 16 high schools serving 26,000 students. Approximately 93 percent of its students are minorities and 50 percent speak a language other than English at home. In 2010, PUHSD discovered that a large number of students were failing Algebra and Geometry courses, yet there were insufficient support systems to help these students improve their grades. The district sought an online solution that would help its diverse population to quickly recover critical mathematical concepts. As Mona Toncheff, Math Content Specialist, explained, “We did not want to be a system where a grade trumps student learning.”

The Key: Early Intervention

PUHSD recognized that with the new Algebra 1 Common Core Curriculum, Edgenuity could be used as an early intervention. The Algebra 1 Common Core Curriculum assumes students knew signed number operations and that they were fluent with basic number operations. The district realized that if students did not have these skills, they would be at a disadvantage and could find themselves weeks behind. As such, the district decided to use Edgenuity courses as an intervention, not in lieu of a core class.



“Students are responding to Edgenuity’s new way of learning.”

Mac Shaik, Math Teacher at Short Mountain High School

The district decided to implement Edgenuity in either a mathematics class or Algebra 1 intervention mathematics lab. Students were selected to participate in Edgenuity courses if they performed poorly on the prior year's Arizona's Instrument to Measure Standards (AIMS) Mathematics tests or received low grades on a recent math assessment.

Once a student performed poorly on a test or quiz in the mathematics class, he or she was offered the chance to take an Edgenuity course. Based on formative test data, teachers selected specific lessons from Edgenuity Algebra 1, Algebra 2, and Geometry courses to address the student's unique skills deficits. Once students finished Edgenuity course content, they took another assessment. If a student passed this assessment, the teacher adjusted the student's grade accordingly. The concept recovery plan, schedule, and responsibilities were made explicit in a contract between the teacher and the student.

Teachers Are Key

The Concept Recovery Plan had a major impact on how teachers teach. Instruction was customized and students received more frequent feedback on their performance.

Mac Shaik, a math teacher at Short Mountain High School, noted, "Students are responding to Edgenuity's new way of learning." Students are working, learning, and succeeding at their own speed.