

Research Brief

Rio Rancho Cyber Academy

RIO RANCHO, NEW MEXICO

Edgenuity Middle and High School Students Outperform Peers on NMSBA and ACT®

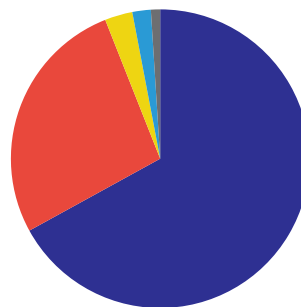
Evaluation Overview

Grades: 6–12

Model: Enriched Virtual

Measure: New Mexico Standards Based Assessment (NMSBA), ACT

School Demographics



| | |
|--------------------|-----|
| ■ Caucasian | 67% |
| ■ Hispanic | 27% |
| ■ African American | 3% |
| ■ American Indian | 2% |
| ■ Asian | 1% |

School Overview

Founded in 2005, Rio Rancho Cyber Academy (RRCA) is an accredited, diploma-granting school that provides blended learning to approximately 180 students in grades 6–12.

RRCA employs eight teachers, a principal, three administrative support staff, and a full-time educational technology specialist who also serves as the district's digital-learning coordinator. A social worker, site specialist, and nurse also work part time.

Implementation

RRCA offers a rigorous hybrid learning program where students engage in online learning from home and attend school two days a week (9 a.m to 4 p.m.).

Students complete Edgenuity mathematics, language arts, science, and social studies courses on their personal computers. They spend a minimum of five hours a week working on each Edgenuity course.

While students are working remotely, teachers use Edgenuity's learning management system to create calendars, monitor student progress, and create flex-groups based on students' understanding of the content.

At school, teachers provide instruction in a computer lab. Students begin the day reviewing math material with their teacher for 90 minutes. During this time, the teacher answers questions and clarifies complex concepts and skills. After the morning math period, teachers provide small-group instruction to help students refine their note-taking, writing, critical thinking, and analytical skills. Teachers also lead students in project-based activities designed to support individualized intervention and enrichment. Formative assessments and consistent feedback are an integral part of the work done at school, that, in turn, supports remote learning.

At RRCA, every teacher is responsible for mentoring, monitoring, and motivating 25 students. Teachers regularly provide academic counseling and tutoring in person and via email. Instructors evaluate student performance prior to each unit assessment by reviewing students' notes and homework for clarity, content, and completion.

RRCA is committed to improving student achievement and constantly re-evaluates, updates, and shares best blended learning practices with other schools and districts across the country.

Study Sample

A total of 130 students comprise the sample used in this report. Of these, 67 percent were Caucasian; 27 percent were Hispanic; 3 percent were African American; 2 percent were American Indian; and 1 percent were Asian. Twelve percent were classified as gifted and talented and 6 percent were receiving special education services.

Measures

NMSBA

The New Mexico Standards Based Assessment (NMSBA) is used to evaluate student, school, and district performance as part of the state accountability system. Students take the NMSBA Mathematics and Reading tests in grades 3–8 and 11. These tests report student scale scores as one of four performance levels: Beginning Step, Nearing Proficiency, Proficient, and Advanced. Students must score at the Proficient level or above to pass the NMSBA.

ACT

The ACT is a curriculum- and standards-based educational and career planning test that assesses students' academic readiness for college. The test consists of four multiple-choice sub-tests: English, Mathematics, Reading, and Science. It provides a benchmark for the minimum score needed for students to be ready for college-level coursework.

Edgenuity Program Data

Edgenuity's learning management system tracks student engagement, progress, and achievement data. This study collected data on the total number of attempted courses, the total number of courses completed, and the average overall grade of students.

Results

Participation Level

Course usage data were collected and analyzed from 130 RRCA students. Table 1 provides descriptive data on program use. Results indicate students earned an average overall grade of 83 percent.

NMSBA

NMSBA Mathematics and Reading Test data were obtained from 58 middle school and 57 high school students. Results revealed that RRCA students demonstrated higher pass rates on the NMSBA Mathematics and Reading Tests than their peers in the state (see Graph 1, Graph 2, Graph 3, and Graph 4). Most notably, 95 percent of seventh-grade RRCA students passed the NMSBA Math Test, compared with 42 percent statewide.

ACT

Data also indicated that the ten eleventh-grade students who took the ACT outscored their state and national peers in all subject areas. For example, on average, RRCA eleventh-grade students demonstrated an average composite score of 22.4, compared to 19.9 for New Mexico test-takers and 21.1 for test-takers across the nation (Table 2).

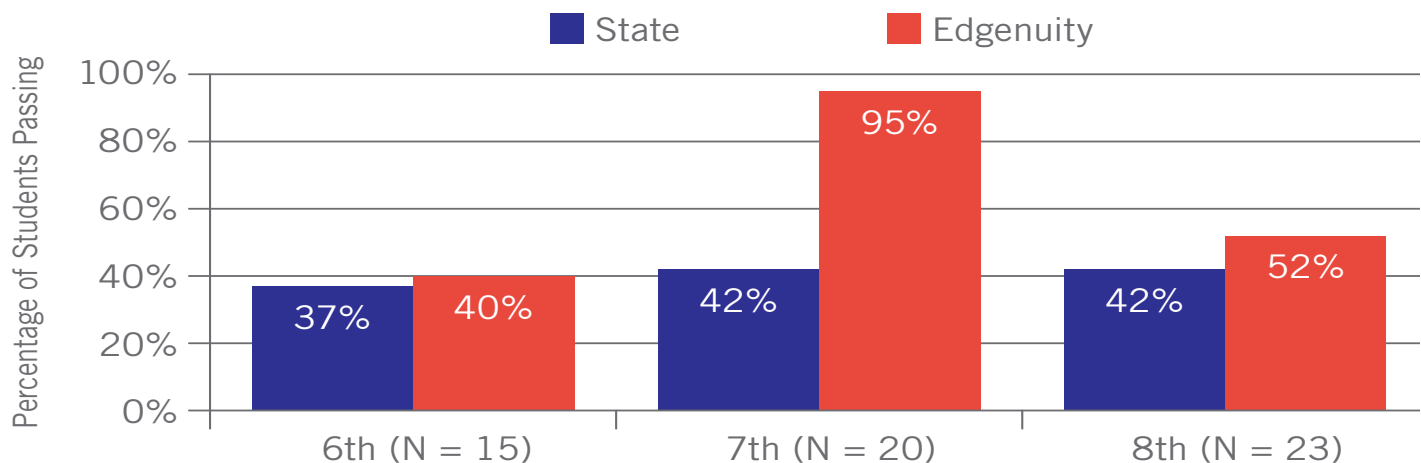
Table 1: Rio Rancho Cyber Academy High School Students (N = 130)

Edgenuity Course Usage Data from August 1, 2011 to June 30, 2012

| Course Subject | Total # Attempted Courses | Total # Fully Completed Courses (100% Completed) | Average Overall Grade |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|--|-----------------------|
| English Language Arts | 259 | 254 | 84% |
| Mathematics | 265 | 252 | 83% |
| Social Studies | 295 | 269 | 85% |
| Science | 307 | 283 | 83% |
| Electives | 197 | 177 | 78% |
| All Courses | 1,323 | 1,235 | 83% |

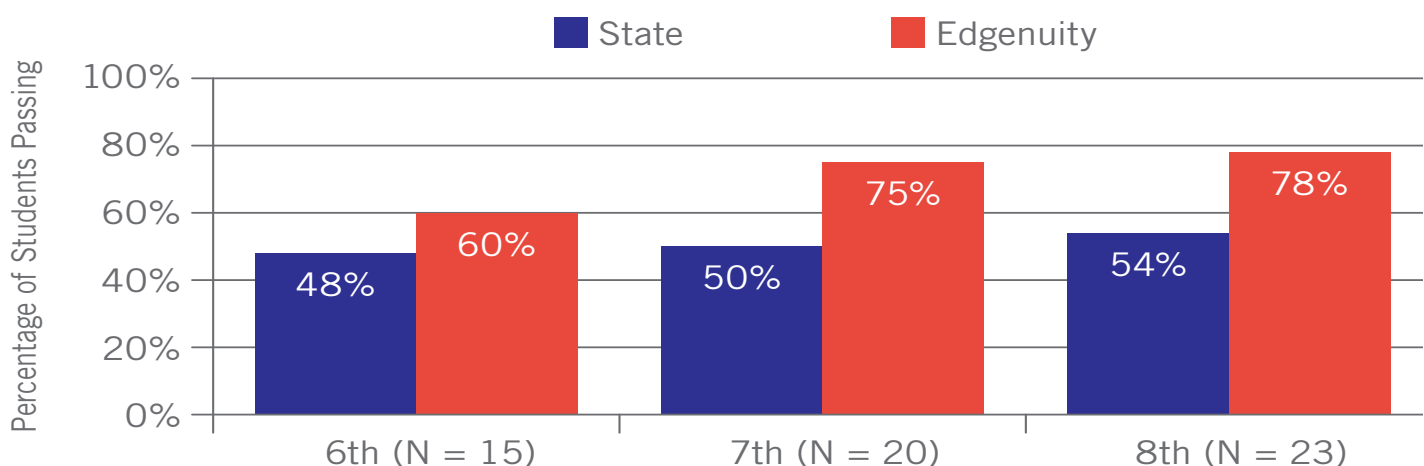
Graph 1: Rio Rancho Cyber Academy Middle School Students (N = 58) and Students Statewide

Percentage of Students Passing the Spring 2012 NMSBA Mathematics Test



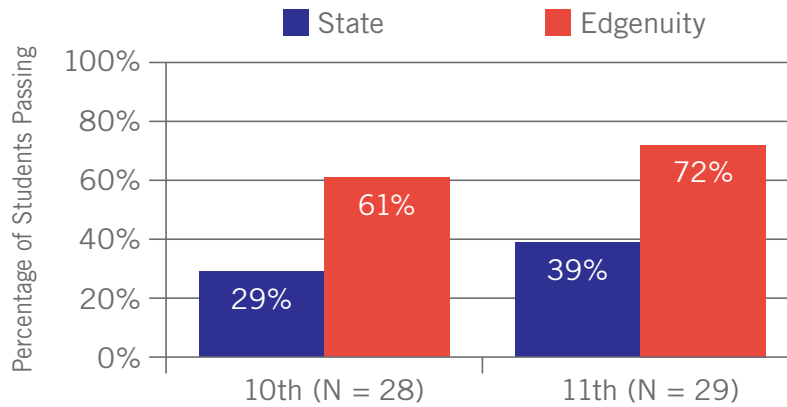
Graph 2: Rio Rancho Cyber Academy Middle School Students (N = 58) and Students Statewide

Percentage of Students Passing the Spring 2012 NMSBA Reading Test



Graph 3: Rio Rancho Cyber Academy High School Students (N = 57) and Students Statewide

Percentage of Students Passing the Spring 2012 NMSBA Mathematics Test



Graph 4: Rio Rancho Cyber Academy High School Students (N = 57) and Students Statewide

Percentage of Students Passing the Spring 2012 NMSBA Reading Test

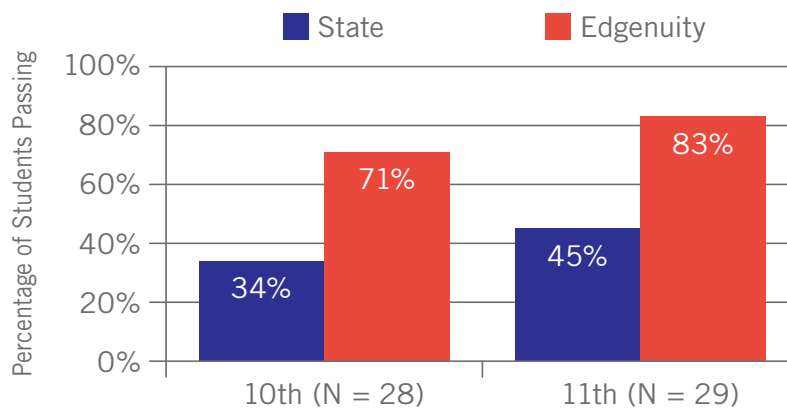


Table 2: Rio Rancho Cyber Academy Students (N = 10), Students Statewide, and Students Nationwide

Mean Scale Scores on the Spring 2012 ACT Test

| 2012 Assessments | Mean Scores for Edgenuity Students | Mean National Scores | Mean New Mexico Scores |
|------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| ACT English | 21.8 | 20.5 | 19.0 |
| ACT Math | 22.8 | 21.1 | 19.6 |
| ACT Reading | 22.8 | 21.3 | 20.3 |
| ACT Science | 22.0 | 20.9 | 20.0 |
| ACT Composite | 22.4 | 21.1 | 19.9 |

Conclusion

Results demonstrated that RRCA students excelled academically in their Edgenuity coursework. Further, students outperformed their state peers on the NMSBA and ACT. This study provided evidence from multiple measures that participation in Edgenuity courses had a positive impact on students' achievement.

