Success Story
Montgomery Virtual Program
MONTGOMERY COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

Virtual Program Implementation
Transforms Summer School

Three years ago, many local school districts in Pennsylvania were losing students to cyber charter schools. When superintendents noticed this trend, they looked to their local Intermediate Units for help establishing a virtual program that would give students the flexibility of online schooling while still maintaining the rigor required in the state. Intermediate Units (IU) are separate entities that work to support local school districts and provide special services as needed, and through Montgomery County Intermediate Unit, Jeffrey Rothenberger established the Montgomery Virtual Program (MVP) in summer of 2014. MVP is a virtual solution for students, and through the IU, they partner with schools and districts to deliver quality online education for students in grades K–12. Rothenberger touts the power of his team, and says, “We pride ourselves on meeting the individual needs of diverse learners, while keeping students enrolled in their local schools.”

ONLINE LEARNING KEEPS STUDENTS LOCAL

MVP presented their options to local districts as a way to expand their course offerings and retain students looking for more flexibility. Several schools decided to partner with MVP, and in their first summer, 323 students signed up for credit recovery and 50 enrolled in courses for credit advancement. Using Edgenuity’s state-aligned courses and state certified teachers, the eight-week summer school program generated immediate results and provided MVP with invaluable feedback about how to expand the program to offer year-round virtual learning solutions.
Students have credit recovery, credit advancement, world languages, and elective choices through MVP, which “provides our students with a flexible way to take courses that might not be offered in their brick-and-mortar school or to get ahead by working from home over the summer,” says Rothenberger. And their enrollments continue to grow. Just three years after opening, MVP had 400 students enrolled in credit recovery courses and over 450 students enrolled in a credit advancement courses over the summer.

CUSTOMIZED CREDIT RECOVERY

MVP offers a differentiated approach to instruction for their students by using Edgenuity’s pre-testing and prescriptive testing options, which is especially helpful for students enrolled in credit recovery. Teachers start the course with a prescriptive assessment to determine what skills students are missing, and based on those results, the courses automatically remove content the student has already mastered, and focuses on the skills and content the student has yet to learn.

And the results are impressive. Eighty-four percent of their credit recovery students finished 90% of their coursework. Of those students who finished 90% of the coursework, 94% of them were successful in passing the course with a 60% or better, which allows them to move on to the next grade.

MEETING 21ST CENTURY SCHOLASTIC NEEDS

MVP treats summer school no differently than the regular academic year, and they work closely with their partner schools to establish high expectations for students. Since most summer school students normally attend a traditional brick-and-mortar school, it was important to set guidelines for attendance, as well as acceptable progress, completion metrics, and assessment scores. This ensures that the students are mastering the content and ready to move on to their next course in the brick-and-mortar setting.

Some partner schools also hire a few teachers for summer school to further support students in the school setting. In addition to Edgenuity’s virtual instructors who deliver the content virtually, the onsite teachers are available as needed on-site at the school’s library or computer lab to provide additional help or one-on-one support. If a student is scoring below the set threshold on quizzes or exams, it is suggested they come in and meet with an on-site teacher.

THE SECRET TO SUMMER SCHOOL SUCCESS

The secret to MVP’s summer school success has been focusing on three key tenets: service, flexibility, and partnership. Their staff is online every day checking student progress and sending progress reports to parents, guidance counselors, and central building administrators. “It takes a village to make sure students are successful, and it’s important to commit to this type of ongoing monitoring and communications,” says Rothenberger.

The addition of online courses allows district students tremendous options for when and where they learn, and it gives the schools flexibility in terms of staffing, scheduling, and course offerings. “Partnering with Edgenuity also allows us to offer flexibility with our courses, not just in the courses we offer, but how we can support students who are enrolled in these courses,” says Rothenberger. “We can make modifications to the scope and sequence, give extra time or attempts on assessments per students’ IEPs, and more.” This allows MVP to meet the ever-changing needs of the schools and students they support. With the support of their staff, Edgenuity’s virtual instructors, and the schools’ administration, guidance counselors and parents, Rothenberger is proud to bring everything together “to give students the opportunity to recover credits or get ahead over the summer and support their academic success throughout the entire school year.”