

Online Learning Platform Getting Results at New Mexico Enriched Virtual School

Edgenuity delivering core curricular content at Rio Rancho Cyber Academy

Located just outside Albuquerque, New Mexico, Rio Rancho Cyber Academy (RRCA) is an accredited, diploma-granting enriched virtual learning school that serves 180 students in grades 6-12, and is part of the Rio Rancho Public Schools. 49 percent of students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch and 14 percent of students receive special education services.

RRCA utilizes an enriched virtual learning environment model, enabling students to take advantage of both a traditional classroom setting enhanced by technology for two days a week, as well as distance learning from home, using a web-based curriculum platform, for the rest of the week.

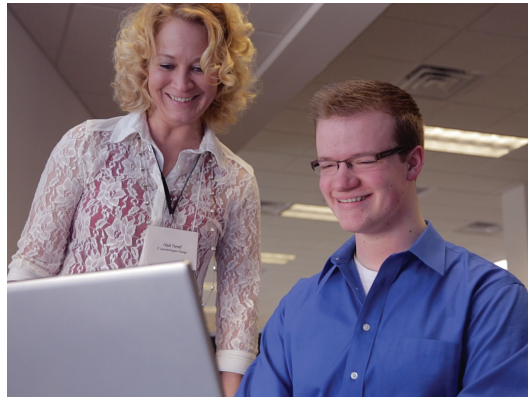
RRCA first opened in August of 2005, but it wasn't long before the school needed to make changes to its online curriculum. "We quickly became frustrated with the limitations of our original web-based curriculum platform," says Elaine Manicke, principal of the academy. "It wasn't meeting our needs."

The administrative team at RRCA immediately began developing a rubric of expectations for a new online learning platform. "We used resources from several professional education technology organizations, did a great deal of research, and included a list of our own needs and expectations," says Manicke.

After developing this rubric, the school invited a number of online learning providers to demonstrate their platforms, and interviewed references from other schools. It was only after this rigorous evaluation process that RRCA decided to implement the online learning platform from Edgenuity for the 2007-2008 school year.

Edgenuity (formerly Education2020) provides rigorous, research-based online curriculum and highly qualified teachers to enable online or blended learning. Edgenuity includes engaging content such as video lessons, multimedia, labs and other interactive activities, and the platform also provides clear, actionable data on student progress and customizable professional development for educators.

"We liked how complete Edgenuity was," says Manicke. "It included a learning management system, an email system, chat



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functions and more. But more importantly, we appreciated how the curriculum wasn't just a textbook put online; it was truly interactive and engaging." RRCA teachers use Edgenuity's LMS to help students create calendars, monitor student progress and performance, and differentiate instruction. Students spend a minimum of five hours per week in each of their core Edgenuity math, language arts, science, and social studies courses.

The results thus far speak for themselves. Data from the spring 2012 New Mexico Standards Based Assessment (NMSBA), a statewide reading and math assessment taken by all students in grades 3-8 and 11, show that

RRCA students significantly outpace their peers in every grade in reading and math, including some 53 percent more seventh-grade students passing the math portion of the exam than the state average.

In addition, 2012 ACT scores from RRCA 11th grade students surpassed both state and national averages in every subject area, including an average ACT composite scale score that was two points higher than the state average.

"We have become the hub of digital learning in our district," says Manicke. "We've had administrators from around the state and neighboring states visit to observe what we do, and we've shared our governance model, best practices and instructional design with them."

"These new pathways to learning are what parents and students are looking for today. I'm proud to say that we've helped our kids become independent learners and ready for college. We've seen kids blossom who didn't like school in the past," she says. "We're excited about the future of our school, because we don't dabble in online learning; it's our lives."

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