![Apex Learning logo]

Switch to Apex Learning Helps Increase Student Achievement

City School District of Albany, New York

Challenge

The City School District of Albany was seeking a solution to prevent students from losing credit due to missing 28 or more days within the school year. Accommodating students' individual academic needs while keeping them on track to graduate on time presented a challenge for the district.

Goal

The district focused on developing a flexible, yet cost-effective credit recovery program that enabled students to complete course work and meet the seat-time requirement. To achieve this, administrators decided to utilize digital curriculum as a solution.

Solution

The district selected Apex Learning Comprehensive Courses as the instructional component of the credit recovery program. Comprehensive Courses are utilized in the district's English AIS (Academic Intervention Services) classes as one of three daily modes of instruction. Over 400 students use Apex Learning courses in these classes.

Results

• Four percentage point increase in the graduation rate

• 274 credits earned through the credit recovery program

• 18 percent of the senior class recovered more credits required to graduate on time

Graduation Rate

↑ **4%**

District Profile

• 1 high school

• 2,300 high school students

• 8,300 K-12 students

Addressing the Challenge

Initially, the district launched the intervention program as part of a Saturday Academy for at-risk students in need of recovering credits. Students completed course work using Apex Learning Comprehensive Courses, moving through the curriculum at their own pace and taking additional time to review topics as necessary.

Based on the success of the Saturday Academy, the district expanded the credit recovery program the following year to include after school study. Students in danger of failing a course could now utilize Apex Learning courses for unit recovery. Offering rigorous instruction, scaffolding, supports, and frequent assessment, Apex Learning curriculum provided students with an engaging learning experience tailored to their individual needs. "Some students have a specific situation that prevents success in a traditional classroom," says Thomas Vacanti, the program's site coordinator. "Apex Learning courses allow us to tailor programs to address each individual's instructional needs."

Increasing Graduation Rates

Since the program's inception, hundreds of students have made up the mandatory seat time and recovered credits required to graduate. During the 2012-2013 school year, students in the City School District of Albany earned a total of 274 credits through the district credit recovery program. In the senior class, 18 percent recovered one or more credits needed to graduate on time. As a result, the district saw a three percentage point increase in graduation rates.

Moving Beyond Credit Recovery

A motivating factor for bringing Apex Learning Comprehensive Courses into the district was to provide a cost-effective option for preventing students from dropping out — and a flexible digital curriculum was the solution. At first, teachers were hesitant to utilize digital curriculum. "We weren't seeking to reduce teaching staff," says Vacanti. "Rather we were seeking a cost-effective solution for providing students more options."

Teacher support grew as they became more accustomed to using digital curriculum. "Today, more teachers use Apex Learning digital curriculum as part of their regular classroom instruction," says Vacanti. "Now, for example, our economics teacher uses Apex Learning courses as a main mode of instruction in his blended learning classroom."

> "We didn't really have a program that could accommodate our students' needs for credit recovery. Apex Learning is the first digital curriculum provider we've used in an effective, widespread manner."
>
> **Thomas Vacanti**
> Site Coordinator

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