

Providing a Roadmap to Graduation and Beyond in Burlington, IL

Burlington Central High School



**Gillian Lachanski &
Jeff Herman,
Central Academy
Coordinators**



**1,000 students
Grades 9-12**



**67% Caucasian
16% Hispanic
10% Asian
13% economically
disadvantaged
12% special education**

The Challenge:

No matter what technology solutions a school employs, it is ultimately the educators who are responsible for the education each student receives while in their care. Knowing that, many schools want to customize any curriculum solution they employ. Unfortunately, not many online programs offer the right level of options and still fully support rigorous, standards-based learning.

Central High School (CHS) in Burlington, Illinois, is one school that desired a more hands-on role in regard to digital curriculum when implementing a new credit recovery program. The school knew that the students for whom the program would be geared responded to a true blended solution, one that leveraged technology, in-person instruction, and collaboration among peers.

“Students come into our program lacking academic skills, which means their confidence is also low,” explained CHS’ credit recovery teacher, Gillian Lachanski. “Above all, they need to learn how to learn.”

After a rigorous selection process, which included student feedback in addition to study by a committee, Edmentum Courseware was selected particularly for the ability it offers to customize courses, embed existing content, and pace learning so that students are supported throughout the process.

Every student has unique learning needs, and no one knows how to address those needs better than teachers. So, when Central High School in Burlington, Illinois, wanted to employ a blended learning solution in its new credit recovery program, the ability to customize course content was at the top of its list of requirements, and it led them to Edmentum’s solutions.

How They Did It:

From day one of the credit recovery program, called “Central Academy,” it is made clear to students that learning will be a team effort unlike anything they may have seen before. A primary goal is established: every student earns at least one credit.

To start, the Central Academy team collaborated with the school’s math and English departments to align their Courseware to the overall CHS curricula. In particular, the departments were tasked with building the unit tests for all credit recovery courses so that they would mirror the learning taking place in the traditional classrooms.

To bolster students’ academic skills, notetaking plays a critical role at Central Academy. Guided notes have been created for each course that utilize scaffolding principles, supporting students as they learn not only how to master the content itself but also how to best organize their thinking. Early units have extensive guided notes that provide content along with graphic organizers, prescribed outlines, and concept maps. In contrast, later units are self-guided, with students responsible for emulating the notetaking skills learned earlier.

Utilizing the guided notes strategy has brought students’ time-on-task to over 85 percent, freeing up teachers to spend more time conferencing with students who need help and monitoring progress. By providing such a clear framework, higher-ability students are encouraged to take their time through a lesson and properly absorb information rather than speed through, while struggling students are able to focus on identifying essential information and organizing it. Acceptable notes are students’ “tickets” to mastery and unit tests.

“What I’ve seen and what’s really, really exciting is that kids enter the program not thinking of themselves as students and leaving with the goal of: ‘I’m going to attend college.’”

Gillian Lachanski,
Central Academy Coordinator

Success:

During the 2017 summer school session of Central High School’s credit recovery program, Central Academy, 95 percent of the 75 students who attended earned a necessary credit toward graduation.

Throughout the school year, students work toward a graduation plan that ranges from one year to three. The program serves students who are anywhere from lacking a single credit up to needing 20 credits. In the three years that Central Academy has been in existence, only a handful of students have not met graduation requirements.

“What I’ve seen and what’s really, really exciting is that kids enter the program not thinking of themselves as students and leaving with the goal of: ‘I’m going to attend college,’” said Ms. Lachanski.

“Students leave the program more confident, knowing who they are as students.”

Gillian Lachanski,
Central Academy Coordinator



The Future:

The teachers at Central Academy, including Ms. Lachanski, keep coming up with ways for Courseware to better serve the needs of their students. For example, teachers are looking forward to embedding videos of themselves delivering lessons into Courseware content to free up even more time for individual support while personalizing the learning for every student.

For more information:

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