

Keeping All Students On Track to Graduation in Caldwell Parish, Louisiana

Caldwell Parish High School, Caldwell Parish, Louisiana

Learning Solutions

- Courseware
- Exact Path

District Profile

- 421 Students
- Grades 9 to 12
- 75% Economically Disadvantaged
- 18% Special Education

Challenge

Every day, Caldwell Parish High School (CPHS) demonstrates that the challenges faced by students from rural and economically disadvantaged communities are not insurmountable. CPHS is an A-rated school in northeast Louisiana and has been for the past three years. Its formula for success includes a dedicated staff of highly qualified educators and administrators, a supportive community, and academic programming that gives every student multiple opportunities to succeed. To help execute the academic program, CPHS partners with Edmentum and utilizes Courseware, Edmentum's online curricula.

Anne Burns, curriculum coordinator for CPHS, manages the Courseware implementation, and she has overseen its expansion over the past 15 years. What once was only a tool for credit recovery is now powering a variety of initiatives to help all students at CPHS graduate from high school college and career ready.

"We use [Courseware] just about every way we can, except for maybe as a coaster," joked Ms. Burns.

Solution

Making up time to earn back credit

Caldwell Parish High School is on a four-day school week schedule, so just five absences cause a student to fall below the attendance requirement. The district helps students in danger of losing credit due to excessive absences by allowing them to make up missed time using Courseware after school. They earn one minute toward their attendance requirement for every two minutes of working in Courseware. Having the opportunity to make up time and, therefore,

TOP
15%

Caldwell Parish High School is in the top 15% in Louisiana for strength of diploma index and overall performance score.

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not losing credit has meant the difference between graduating and dropping out for several students.

"I had a child in my office the other day, and she looked at me and said, 'I didn't realize it was my fifth day; does that mean I'm not going to graduate?'" recalled Ms. Burns. "I said, 'No, that means you're going to get in high [gear], and you're going to get this done.' And, it really makes a difference because she's one who would have walked out right then and there, never gotten a diploma, and that would have been it. That diploma is so important; they don't know how important it is until they get out and try to find a job."

Recovering content before losing credit and recovering credit once it's lost

When a student earns a failing grade for the nine-week grading period, passing the semester can seem impossible. Many students give up, leading them to eventually fail the course and lose the credit. To keep this from happening, CPHS implemented unit recovery. Students can bring their failing grade up to a D by successfully completing the required coursework in Courseware after school or at home. Earning a higher grade gives students an opportunity to pass for the semester if they improve their performance for the next nine weeks.

Students who need to recover a failed course or who transfer from a district with a different type of schedule also use Courseware to make up the content they need and get back on track to graduation.

Keeping homebound students on track

CPHS homebound students also complete coursework in Courseware with the support of a teacher for homebound students who regularly visits and the classroom teacher of record who grades work and provides feedback and assistance. This program keeps students from falling behind when they can't physically be at school.

Expanding course offerings to support the needs of every student

At CPHS, Courseware isn't only used by students who need to catch up; it's also used for initial credit, allowing the school to offer a wider variety of courses. Because CPHS is located in a rural community, teachers certified to teach specialized subjects, like foreign languages, are hard to find. To provide students with the two full years of foreign language that they need to graduate in the face of this teacher shortage, CPHS hired a retired Spanish teacher, even though she could only teach part time. The Spanish teacher comes in two days a week to provide in-person instruction and feedback, and two days a week, students work online on Courseware in a computer lab staffed by a paraprofessional.

Students also use Courseware when they need to take a course for which there isn't enough demand to warrant an entire class section.



"One of the reasons that we are an A school is because of our graduation rate, our ACT scores, and our strength of our diploma [index], and it's because of these kids using Edmentum and catching up and us not letting them fall behind. So, it's saved a lot of kids."

ANNE BURNS
Curriculum Coordinator



This occurs most often for electives and career and technical education (CTE) courses that students take to fulfill the requirements of their Jump Start (Louisiana's CTE program) pathways.

One other way that CPHS students use Courseware for initial credit is when it's not possible to fit a required course into their schedules. In this case, students are allowed to complete coursework after school or at home, and take unit and end-of-semester tests on campus proctored by a teacher to maintain academic integrity.

Preparing students for the ACT and ACT WorkKeys assessments

In Louisiana, all students are required to take the ACT or WorkKeys assessments. In addition to the assessment results being used for college admissions, for scholarship award decisions, and for assessing job skills in career readiness programs, 25 percent of the state accountability score for high schools is based on ACT and WorkKeys performance. To prepare for these important tests, students use Courseware. Some utilize the online courses for use with the ACT or WorkKeys exams through an

assessment preparation class period built into their schedules, while others work through the course after school or at home.

"I have kids who will come to me and say, 'Ms. Burns, I need to take the test in March again, and I'm really low in English; what can you do?'" explained Ms. Burns. "And I'll put them on ACT prep, and they'll work through it, and it has helped kids that way."

Providing reading remediation for struggling learners using Edmentum Exact Path

In addition to leveraging Courseware, CPHS recently implemented Exact Path, Edmentum's K-12 individualized learning and intervention program, with a small number of 9th grade students who are below grade level in reading. These students have a reading remediation class period built into their schedules in which they use Exact Path alongside traditional instruction. As the implementation is only a few months old, results aren't available yet, but educators are looking forward to seeing the impact using the program will make.

Result

The success CPHS has experienced using Courseware is demonstrated in its A rating from the state and its level of performance across multiple Louisiana accountability measures. CPHS' graduation rate for the 2018-19 school year was greater than 95 percent; its ACT index, a performance measure based on ACT and WorkKeys performance, is in the top 25 percent of high schools in the state; and its strength of diploma index, which measures graduation outcomes and college and career readiness, as well as its overall

school performance score, are both in the top 15 percent in the state.

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