

Honing In On Digital Programs That Guide Data-Driven Learning with Fidelity in Indiana

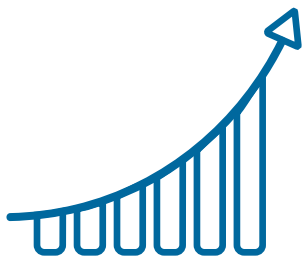
Mitchell Community Schools - Mitchell, Indiana

Learning Solutions

- Courseware
- Exact Path
- Study Island

District Profile

- 1,500 Students
- Grades pre-K to 12
- 52% Economically Disadvantaged
- 93% Caucasian
- 3% Hispanic



Students who initially placed in the lowest percentile compared to peers nationally are now showing

STEADY GROWTH

Challenge

In fall 2020, school leaders at Mitchell Community Schools (MCS) in Mitchell, Indiana, identified a significant need to streamline their online program ecosystem. As a district using many different learning solutions that offered a plethora of data points, educators found it difficult to build program expertise and strategically act on the data they were getting. A thoughtful technology audit and conversations with different providers soon followed.

In preparation for the meeting with Edmentum, who was already an existing partner in a smaller capacity, Dr. Brent Comer, superintendent at Mitchell Community Schools, remembered saying, "I just needed someone to listen to what our goals were and what we were trying to do. That meeting was literally four intensely listening people. It was just very genuine. And they said, 'We're here to help you help kids.'"

The search for a partner rather than just a provider ended with Edmentum, as school leaders adopted a suite of programs to simplify its assessment and digital curriculum across grades K-12.

"Simply put, Edmentum continues to be a true partner, and that was a nonnegotiable for me," stated Dr. Comer. "I didn't need to pay someone as a provider. I needed a partner in the work we were doing. Now, everything we do is under the Edmentum umbrella because of the continued great customer service."

Solution

Diagnosing Learning Gaps

One of the key needs in the district's path toward simplification was in regard to diagnostic assessments that would help efficiently and effectively benchmark learning needs for students. In January

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of 2020, educators and students began a pilot of Exact Path, Edmentum's diagnostic-driven individualized learning program, that has since turned into a complete K-12 implementation.

"We really use Exact Path as our gap-filling tool," commented Jessica Jones, assistant superintendent at Mitchell Community Schools. "After our students take the diagnostics, the teacher and the student are able to see: 'What am I missing? What do I need to fill in to get to grade level?' so that can be a really powerful experience."

At the elementary level, students work on their individualized learning paths in the program 30 minutes a week per subject during learning stations, allowing educators to pull small groups for targeted intervention.

"As students earn Trophies [for successfully mastering Exact Path skills], they would get a sticker to put on their chart," commented Whitney Pannebaker, 4th grade teacher at Burriss Elementary School in the district. "They get really excited about it, so getting my kids to be invested in it was really cool. It's friendly competition, which is fun."

At the secondary level specifically, Exact Path is a powerful differentiation program for students receiving intervention in math labs for algebra I or geometry.

"There was a student at the junior high who was really struggling in math," recalled Melissa Epping, secondary math coach. "I think she saw the power of [Exact Path]. This year, she is no longer in math lab and is carrying A's across the board in math. It made such an impact on that student's ability to feel successful. For students like her, it's almost life changing to suddenly be successful at something that they've struggled with before."

Mastering Grade-Level Standards

Another programmatic need the district had was regarding Indiana-standards-aligned practice and formative assessment to help ensure that students reached grade-level mastery. For this, Study Island became an important element at the elementary level with a focus on reading and math in K-2 classrooms, and later, the district added science and social studies in 3-5 classrooms.

"Teachers have found a lot of success in using Study Island with Group Session[s] mode so they can see in real time exactly what students are mastering and what they need more help with," remarked Ms. Jones. "That has been a very powerful, quick feedback instructional practice that we've developed."



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DR. BRENT COMER
Superintendent

Recovering Credits & Supporting First-Time Credit

Courseware, Edmentum’s grades 6–12 standards-aligned digital curriculum, remains a staple in the Mitchell Community Schools programming makeup to serve student needs at both ends of the learning spectrum.

“Courseware is not only our past, present, but also in our future plans too,” noted Dr. Comer. “We use it for getting kids that have fallen behind to catch up and, on the opposite end, those that want to be pushed and want to take some accountability to push themselves a little bit.”

National Percentile Rank Trends for K–12 Students in Exact Path						
	Reading			Math		
	Exact Path Diagnostic 1 (Fall 2020)	Exact Path Diagnostic 2 (Winter 2020)	Change in Percentile Rank	Exact Path Diagnostic 1 (Fall 2020)	Exact Path Diagnostic 2 (Winter 2020)	Change in Percentile Rank
0-24%	32%	24%	-8%	43%	33%	-10%
25-49%	32%	33%	+1%	27%	32%	+5%
50-74%	22%	24%	+2%	18%	20%	+2%
75-99%	14%	19%	+5%	13%	16%	+3%

Result

In the face of learning disruptions throughout spring 2020 and fall 2020, Edmentum programs continue to be a steadfast support in offering rigorous learning continuity.

“I appreciate how pacing and progress is very easy to see in the programs so that we can check in on students and families and continue to see that our students are learning and growing,” said Ms. Jones.

Of course, like many in other districts, March 2020 through May 2020 created many challenges with forced extended e-learning.

“We came in very low [in fall 2020], but through

our teachers really focusing on those essential standards and working really hard to fill in those learning gaps and deficits, by diagnostic two [in Exact Path], we were able to show a lot of growth,” reported Ms. Jones. “So that was very exciting to see across the board!”

With more than 11,000 skills mastered by K–12 students between August 2020 and January 2021, there is much to celebrate at Mitchell Community Schools. As shown in the table above, students who initially placed in the lowest percentile as compared to peers nationally are making steady growth.

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