

# The Remedy for Keystone Exam Struggles in Pennsylvania in York Springs, PA

Bermudian Springs High School



**Sharon Allison,  
Online Learning Aide**



**625 students  
Grades 9 to 12**



**Assessments  
Courseware**



**90% Caucasian  
8% Hispanic  
21% free/reduced lunch**

## The Challenge:

Preparation for Pennsylvania's high-stakes end-of-course exams and credit recovery take the forefront for a rural high school seeking to expand its options for struggling students who are at risk of becoming another disappointing statistic.

Bermudian Springs High School is a small, rural school located between Gettysburg and Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. Like most other schools, the combination of high-stakes testing and end-of-course graduation requirements has had an adverse effect on struggling students. When Pennsylvania implemented its Keystone Exams in 2012, students needed to pass these end-of-course assessments in algebra I, reading, and biology to graduate. Others found themselves short on credits because of family, work, or other complications.

Bermudian Springs' graduation rate was starting to drop toward 90 percent after several years of being over 95 percent. "We needed more students scoring proficient or better on their Keystone Exams and more students obtaining the credits they needed for graduation," explained Sharon Allison, online learning aide at Bermudian Springs. As in other settings, rural high school students need as many scheduling options and as much flexibility as possible to make these goals a reality.

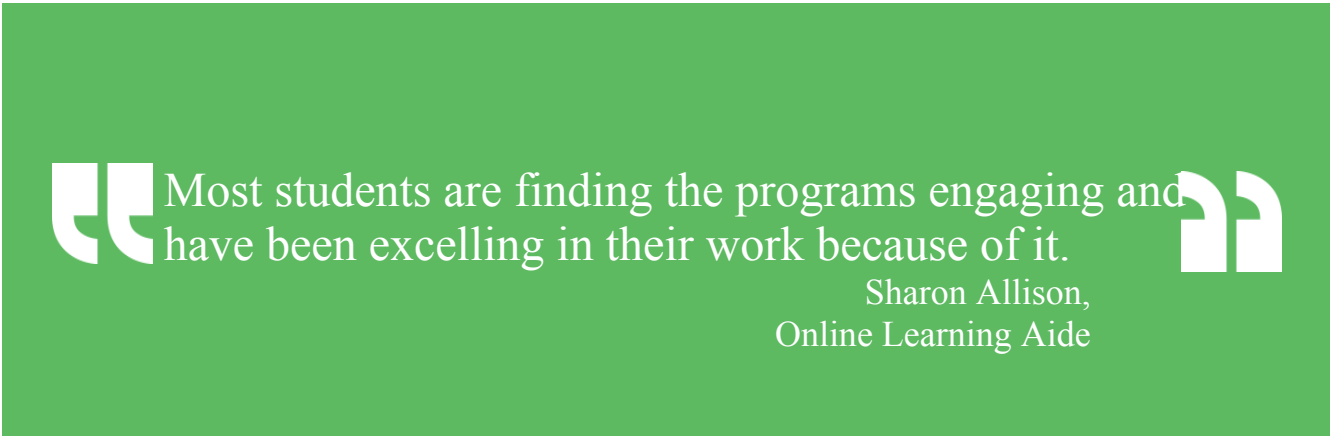
**Through a suite made up of Plato Courseware and Edmentum Assessments, Bermudian Springs was able to offer students opportunities in remediation and preparation for the Keystone Exams, as well as the ability to make up missing credits, keeping the possibility of graduation in sight for students who might not have remained motivated otherwise.**

## How They Did It:

Through a solution bundle made up of Plato Courseware and Edmentum Assessments (which includes Test Packs and Accucess), Bermudian Springs was able to offer students opportunities in remediation and preparation for the Keystone Exams, as well as the ability to make up missing credits, keeping the possibility of graduation in sight for students who might not have remained motivated otherwise.

“Students are guided through the system by me—a dedicated aide—as well as their response to intervention specialist and their classroom teachers,” described Allison. All of the school’s assets, including computer labs, classroom computers, and at-home availability, have been made available to the students. Students can work wherever they are and whenever they have the time, while keeping up with their existing schedules.

Using Accucess and Test Packs, students take a diagnostic test early in the school year to predict their success on the Keystone Exams. Concepts in need of wide-ranging remediation are shared with parents in review packets so that they can help at home while students work with Plato Courseware.



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## Success:

Early in the implementation, seven students received missing credits they wouldn’t have earned without the program. Students needing remediation toward success in the Keystone Exams have been successfully completing their Plato Courseware in algebra, biology, and literature. In just the fall semester of 2013, 189 students used Plato Courseware for a total of nearly 3,000 hours. The majority of students spent that time in math courses. “Most students are finding the programs engaging and have been excelling in their work because of it,” reported Allison.

## The Future:

Between Pennsylvania's mandates and the shift to the Common Core State Standards, these could be potentially challenging times for Bermudian Springs High School. But, as its Edmentum program grows and more students become aware of their options, the staff feels confident that the school will continue on its upward trajectory.

## For more information:

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