

Providing Flexible Credit Options in Middlebury, Indiana

Northridge Middle School



**Lauren Bailey,
Blended Learning
Teacher**



**1,100 students
Grades 6 to 8**



Courseware



**84% Caucasian
13% English language
learners
11% special education
27% free/reduced lunch**

The Challenge:

It's safe to say that blended learning is opening up doors to innovative opportunities that weren't available just a few years ago. For students in need of flexibility in credit attainment, one middle school has found a way to create instructional options that are keeping students in the district who might otherwise have been leaving for homeschooling or a virtual schooling option outside of the district.

Northridge Middle School (NMS) in Middlebury, Indiana, has created a special home for students in its blended learning lab, led by teacher Lauren Bailey. NMS identified a need to supplement its existing curriculum by offering more online options for a student body with diverse needs.

"We realized that Edmentum could also serve to provide our current students with hundreds of additional course offerings and meet some of their own unique learning needs," said Dr. Robby Goodman, assistant superintendent.

NMS was also seeking to provide an alternative for students who have trouble finding success in the traditional classroom environment, including those who have severe anxiety, those who are homebound, and those who require alternative scheduling.

"We really focused on where students were going and targeted how to get them here, while thinking how to collaborate with their worlds and expectations for learning," said Bailey.

Providing flexible credit options to middle school students is important, whether they need to catch up to their peers or earn credits toward high school. Northridge Middle School in Indiana has found a way to provide these alternatives, as well as other flexible options for its diverse student population.

How They Did It:

After intensive research and a successful pilot, NMS decided on implementing a suite of Edmentum solutions—EdOptions Academy to provide virtual courses that are otherwise unavailable in the school's existing curriculum, Edmentum Courseware to provide curriculum for students who are more successful in an online environment, and Study Island to provide remediation support and standards reinforcement in math.

“Our model of blended learning allows a great deal of flexibility,” explained Bailey. “A lab is available, and some students come every day for a certain time period away from their other public school classes. Otherwise, students may come a few days a week on a schedule that meets their family needs, and some students come in as support is needed.”

With so many tasks going on in one location, monitoring student success is also crucial. For that, Bailey finds the data available in Edmentum's teacher dashboards to be invaluable. “I watch my students' performance daily as they are completing work, then communicate that info weekly with families, students, and administration,” said Bailey.

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Blended Learning Teacher

Success:

To date, NMS' blended learning initiative has provided over 150 high school credits to middle school students to help prepare them for the next step in their studies. Because of the diverse options it offers, NMS has also become the school of record for 25 students from other districts or online academies, providing added revenue for the school and district.

The success of the Edmentum implementation is recognized not only by Bailey but by other school staff as well. Pam Shenk, the blended learning guidance counselor, believes the blended learning classroom has opened up doors for students at NMS.

“We have seen success with our gifted students who are able to be challenged in high school level courses,” said Shenk. “They work at their own speed and aren't limited to the pacing of a traditional classroom. Our general education students are also successful because they are able to slow down the pacing of a unit so they really understand the material.”

Another benefit the blended learning implementation has provided for NMS is the ability to offer a program other local schools were not, therefore becoming attractive to out-of-district families currently looking for other options. Once students enroll in some sort of virtual or online learning option, they also become eligible for athletics, academic teams, and other activities through the school. Bailey notes that with this draw, “Nine times out of ten, we find that once we get those kids involved in some way, they find success, and we find ways to get them here more.”

Bailey credits the NMS blended learning program with meeting a long list of student needs, even unanticipated ones. It has served students who have been in crisis, students who have lost a loved one, and students who have disabilities.

“We are able to provide one calm environment where students can take any number of courses with the support of a classroom and digital teacher,” said Bailey. “The flexibility to work from home when anxiety is too high is also powerful and alleviates stress from families without accumulating excessive absences.”

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Robby Goodman,
Assistant Superintendent

The Future:

Northridge Middle School will become a one-to-one school beginning in the 2018–19 school year, and educators are currently vetting additional Edmentum solutions to see if they can provide an online environment that all students will soon have access to.

Additionally, the blended learning lab will continue to serve students with unique needs and interests. To date, Bailey is able to determine which courses to offer based on student interests, such as art or photography. Based on the number of students with a particular interest, she can decide if it is best to find a teacher for that subject using digital curriculum from Edmentum Courseware or if the need is better met with a virtual teacher from EdOptions Academy. Either way, supporting these students will continue to be made possible with the school’s Edmentum partnership.

For more information:

Contact 800.447.5286 or visit www.edmentum.com to learn more about Edmentum's online learning solutions.