

CENTRAL DAVIE ACADEMY

Mocksville, North Carolina

PROFILE

School District: Davie County School District

District Enrollment: 6,524 students

School Enrollment: 400 students

Grades: 6-12

Free/Reduced Price Lunch: 40%

Ethnicity:

- 80% Caucasian
- 9% Hispanic
- 6% African American
- 4% Multi-racial
- 1% Asian

CHALLENGE

As a specialized alternative school, Central Davie Academy (CDA) works with students who exhibit extreme disruptive behavior and are unable to maintain their conduct at a traditional school. Students who attend CDA have often been suspended for a long period of time or have been expelled. Middle and high schools throughout the district refer students to CDA, thus their main challenge was to increase district attendance and graduation rates, decrease the number of district dropouts, and offer students an opportunity for credit recovery.

SOLUTION

Pearson Digital's NovaNET® and SuccessMaker® Enterprise courseware solutions met the very specialized needs of CDA. Beth Weatherman, principal, explains, "Providing traditional instruction in an alternative school environment is nearly impossible. We have one high school and one middle school room serving the most behaviorally challenged students in the district. Pearson's computerized curricula programs allow teachers to oversee student learning as each works on their individual courses and specific ability levels."

NovaNET's Basic Achievement Skills Inventory™ (BASI) tool is used to assess each student's academic strengths, weaknesses and ability levels. Teachers then review the student's results to develop a schedule and academic program based on the student's individual needs. CDA uses a traditional seven period day for middle school students including: math, language arts, science, social studies, PE/health, life skills (character education), and either computer

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ENTERPRISE

"Clearly, the guiding principle at Central Davie Academy is doing what is in the best interest of the students. The students served at CDA present great challenges, academic, social and behavioral, and the staff strives to perceive the individual challenges for each student and pave a way for them to overcome those challenges. More than once, I have heard Mrs. Weatherman, the principal, say, 'He/She has been here a long time, but he/she is still making progress, and we're committed to serving him/her for as long as we see some progress and improvement.' In a school where all placements are, by design, temporary, this attitude is phenomenal, and it is shared by all members of the staff, not just the principal."

— **Danny W. Cartner, Ed.D.**
principal
South Davie Middle School



SOLUTION (Continued)

skills or art. SuccessMaker is used to supplement instruction in language arts, science and math. Students in grades 6-8 can work at their own pace and level for these subjects. The reporting tool within SuccessMaker Enterprise helps students check their own progress and set goals for themselves.

High school students are on a block schedule with four courses, along with character education and journaling each day. Based on their certification, teachers rotate into each classroom to optimize the students' exposure to highly qualified staff and increase student achievement.

RESULTS

The majority of students attend CDA's intervention program six months or a full year, although some stay even longer. To gauge progress students retake the BASI at increments throughout the year and are required to take it one more time before they transition back into regular school. This process along with generating reports in NovaNET and SuccessMaker Enterprise document student achievement and is helpful information for the teachers they will have following transition back to their former school.

"Academic gains that our students have made during the three years we have been open are amazing," says Weatherman. CDA gauges student achievement by the amount of grade levels a student progresses. For example, in their second year (2007-2008), the highest math computation gain made by a student was a 6.4 grade equivalency. The 9th grade female initially tested at the 6th grade level and then at the 12.4 grade level upon transition from CDA. Many students have shown similar gains including:

- A 4.9 grade equivalency gain in math application for 9th grade female
- A 7.2 grade equivalency gain in vocabulary for a 9th grade male
- A 6.1 grade equivalency gain in spelling for a 10th grade male
- A 6.7 grade equivalency gain in language mechanics for a 9th grade female
- And an 8.4 grade equivalency gain in reading comprehension for an 11th grade female.

"When academic progress and success is experienced, behavioral improvements follow. Students have made tremendous documented academic gains with NovaNET and SuccessMaker Enterprise's individualized instruction. This academic success is a spring-board for increased self confidence and sense of self worth, and results in overall behavioral success," says Susan Mademann, CDA exceptional children's teacher. With the help of CDA, students who progress back to their schools are better equipped to continue their education and graduate with their peers.

"Students frequently have significant deficits in academic achievement compared to their same-age peers upon enrollment in the alternative program. When academic progress and success is experienced, behavioral improvements follow.

"Students have made tremendous documented academic gains with NovaNET and SuccessMaker Enterprise's individualized instruction. This academic success is a spring-board for increased self confidence and sense of self worth, and results in overall behavioral success. Additionally, students of varying ability levels and subject matter work side-by-side without feeling self-conscious. Computer-generated reports document time-on-task and progress in skills and coursework."

— Susan Mademann
exceptional children's teacher
Central Davie Academy

"Students' academic success is enhanced when pairing quality educators with NovaNET and SuccessMaker Enterprise. Students have the opportunity to receive individualized instruction on their specific academic level. It is a great combination!"

— Cathy MacDonell
crisis intervention specialist
Davie County Schools