

Outcomes of Blended and Online Learning Programs in Schools Using Fuel Education Curriculum



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Introduction

The most noted keys to success were the strong relationships between individual teachers and individual students supported by the comprehensive and flexible online curriculum provided by FuelEd.

Evergreen Education Group completed case studies for nine schools, listed in Table 1, that were using Fuel Education (FuelEd) online curriculum and platforms as the instructional foundation of their online and blended learning programs. The goal of these case studies was to examine and document instructional models, practices, and outcomes of FuelEd-based programs to further the understanding and potential benefits of these programs. A high-level summary of these case studies follows.

The programs in five of the schools were whole school programs, in which the underlying instructional program for the entire school and all of its students was one or multiple forms of an online and blended learning model. Whole school approaches varied with each school incorporating and emphasizing different aspects of online learning, blended learning, project-based learning, and traditional classroom instruction, coupled with unique staffing patterns to provide a wide range of options for their students. The programs in the other four schools were credit recovery and remediation programs serving selected students within a traditional school. Students in these programs most often attended on-campus learning labs to take FuelEd courses to recover credits or improve or accelerate academic performance.

Table 1: Schools, Programs, and Instructional Models

School	Location	Grade Levels Served	Year FuelEd Program Started	Instructional Delivery Model
Whole School Programs – Standard curriculum serving all students in the school				
Crater Lake Charter Academy	Eagle Point, OR	K–12	2014	Online, blended, traditional classroom
Method Schools Murrieta	Murrieta, CA	K–12	2014	Online, blended, project-based
Pivot Charter School Tampa	Tampa, FL	6–12	2014	Online, blended, traditional classroom
Poudre School District Global Academy	Fort Collins, CO	K–12	2009	Online, blended, traditional classroom
Springs Studio for Academic Excellence	Colorado Springs, CO	K–12	2010	Online, blended, project-based
Credit Recovery and Remediation – Programs for a subset of students in the school				
Carver Military Academy	Chicago, IL	9–12	2007	Online learning labs in the school
John Marshall Metropolitan High School	Chicago, IL	9–12	2011	Online learning labs in the school
Williams Junior Senior High School	Williams, CA	7–12	2013	Online learning labs in the school
Wright City Academy	Wright City, MO	9–12	2013	Online learning labs in the school

Schools differed in size, demographics, community types, location, and from one to six of years of experience using FuelEd curriculum.

The research team visited each school to observe programs firsthand and to interview students, faculty, staff, and school leaders. Structured interviews and focus groups were conducted based on a set of specific, open-ended questions that prompted wide ranging discussions which the research team allowed to evolve.

Summary of Common Characteristics in All Schools

Overall, the research team was struck by the upbeat, positive attitudes of students, teachers, and staff, and by the different but impressive results within each program. The most noted keys to success were the strong relationships between individual teachers and individual students supported by the comprehensive and flexible online curriculum provided by FuelEd.

While the whole school and credit recovery programs had fundamentally different goals and objectives, important similarities were observed across programs in all nine schools. These similarities were notable, for example, in how both whole school and credit recovery programs used the entire range of FuelEd curriculum offerings.

Significant characteristics across all schools—whole school and credit recovery programs:

- All schools made it a priority to establish personal relationships between teachers and students. Teachers said that having a better understanding of personal and family situations positively influenced their teaching and counseling responsibilities, enabling them to better guide students. Many students said they believed their teachers genuinely cared about them and would help them become successful.
- The FuelEd curriculum was the primary source of instruction in all schools, enabling teachers to work more directly with students both one-to-one and in small groups. The principal of Springs Studio for Academic Excellence said, for example, that the goal for teachers was to get as close as possible to one-to-one tutoring for each student.
- One of the chief benefits of the FuelEd curriculum, as cited by school leaders, was its comprehensive catalog of courses, with offerings for kindergarten through 12th grade, including core courses, electives, advanced courses, credit recovery, and remediation. School leaders liked the idea that they could address most, if not all, of their instructional requirements from a single provider. Additionally, teachers in all schools reported that FuelEd's courses were appropriately rigorous and provided a highly engaging learning experience for their students.
- Students had both online teachers and on-campus teachers for the same course—sometimes the same teacher and sometimes different teachers. In whole school programs, on-campus teachers were responsible for teaching both the on-campus and online components of the same course, except for selected world languages and electives taught by FuelEd teachers. Credit recovery courses were taught by FuelEd teachers, complemented by on-campus teachers working with students face-to-face in learning labs.
- Most students interacted with their teachers frequently each day, both face-to-face when they were on campus and virtually when they were studying online from home. Many students said they received more personal attention from teachers in these programs than they did in their former traditional schools.
- In all programs, students were able to work at their own pace and were encouraged to do so. Most students reported this flexibility as one of the major reasons for their success.
- The wide range of student demographics across schools suggested that the programs in these schools were effective for many different types of students. The principal of Carver Military Academy noted, “We used to think we had to select the ‘right’ students for these online courses, but that’s not really the case. We are putting all sorts of students in these courses, and they are being successful.”
- Teacher satisfaction was consistently high, primarily because teachers had time to get to know and work with individual students, guided by real-time, student performance data from FuelEd and other measurements. Teachers enjoyed their roles as tutors, mentors and counselors, and valued frequent collaboration with fellow teachers.
- Teachers typically received training on the use of the FuelEd platform through face-to-face training by FuelEd instructors. On the other hand, most students learned about the FuelEd platform by completing a short, FuelEd lesson.

“We used to think we had to select the ‘right’ students for these online courses but that’s not really the case. We are putting all sorts of students in these courses and they are being successful.”

– Principal,
Carver Military
Academy

Whole School Standard Curriculum Programs

Five schools were whole school programs, in which the underlying instructional model for the entire student body consisted of unique combinations of online, blended, project-based, and classroom strategies (see Table 2). Schools were at various stages of program implementation, ranging from two just finishing their first year to schools in their fifth and sixth years. The schools in their fifth and sixth years of implementation each evolved and changed their instructional models over time. Specifically, both of these schools started as virtual, online-only programs with no school facility, and then evolved into multi-faceted, campus-based programs, blending features from several on-campus and off-campus instructional models.

Most students selected whole school programs to pursue educational options and experiences not available in traditional schools.

Significant characteristics of the whole school programs:

- Instructional models in all the whole school programs were built around the use of FuelEd curriculum as the primary source of instruction and online content. For nearly all courses, resident teachers in these schools taught both the online and face-to-face, on-campus components of the FuelEd courses, thus allowing most students to work with a single teacher for all phases of a course.
- FuelEd teachers usually taught only the online world language courses and some elective courses. Some schools, during the first year or two of their programs, also used FuelEd teachers for core courses. However, as enrollment increased, all the whole school programs hired full-time, local teachers for the core subjects.
- Teachers relied heavily on the FuelEd student performance reports, feedback from parents, and other tools to identify struggling students and develop personalized learning paths. For example, Method Schools Murrieta teachers used several assessment tools to assemble Focused Direct Instruction (FDI) sessions, which were mini-lectures, discussions, or demonstrations for small groups of students struggling with the same topic. Another school regrouped students across the entire school twice weekly, based on data from FuelEd reports and discussions among teachers.
- On-campus teachers usually worked with students individually or in small groups, albeit they sometimes delivered presentations or lectures to groups as large as 10 or 12. In addition to collaborative and blended learning activities, the on-campus experience focused on the development of personal relationships among students, teachers, learning coaches, and administrators. Many teachers believed that the strong personal relationships they had with their students motivated those students to work harder, set challenging personal goals, and strive to achieve those goals. The achievement data for many of the schools indicated these students often outperformed their peers in traditional schools (see the specific data in the cases below).
- Most students selected whole school programs to pursue educational options and experiences not available in traditional schools. Some students who had been unsuccessful in traditional schools turned to these programs seeking new solutions. When asked why they decided to enroll in these innovative programs, many students cited the greater control over their own learning and more flexibility in scheduling.
- Schools actively encouraged students to set goals and take responsibility for their learning. As an ongoing process, students usually worked with their teachers and counselors to set goals and monitor their progress. This helped them learn to self-assess and determine when they needed to review their progress and ask for assistance. Aided by teachers and parents, students at Poudre School District Global Academy set learning goals starting as early as kindergarten (e.g. “I will master these four new math skills this fall.”). Starting in the sixth grade, students in another school developed personal plans aimed at college and career readiness.

Whole School Standard Curriculum Program Highlights

An online and blended learning model formed the underlying instructional program for the entire school and all of its students.

FuelEd provided the primary online curriculum and educational platform.

On-campus teachers typically taught both the on-campus and online components of a course.

FuelEd teachers taught several online courses, including world languages and some electives.

On-campus teachers worked with students face-to-face, both individually and in small groups, and collaborated with them online.

Table 2: Whole School Standard Curriculum Programs

School	Students in School	School Staff	Typical Student Schedule
Crater Lake Charter Academy	250	4 teachers 6 instructional support staff 5 administrative and support staff	Most elementary and middle school students were on campus 6 hours per day, Monday through Thursday. High school students came to campus as needed. A few students were virtual-only students and completed their online courses from home, coming to campus when they wanted help.
Method Schools Murrieta	75	6 teachers (for three Method sites) 4 support staff (for three Method sites)	Most students in grades K–8 were on campus Monday through Thursday. Most students in grades 9–12 were on campus Thursday and Friday. The school day was 5.5 hours. A few students were virtual-only students, who took their online courses from home. They came to campus only as needed.
Pivot Charter School Tampa	300	13 teachers 1 counselor 4 administrative and support staff	All students were on campus Monday through Friday. There were three cohorts, each on campus 5 hours per day. Start times for the three cohorts were 8 a.m., 9:30 a.m., and 11:30 a.m.
Poudre School District Global Academy	160	12 teachers 7 administrative and support staff	All students were on campus on Tuesday. Grades 9–12 students were also on campus on Wednesday. Grades K–8 students were also on campus on Thursday. The school day was 7 hours.
Springs Studio for Academic Excellence	521	15.75 teachers 5 student coaches 2 counselors 5 administrative and support staff	K–5 students were on campus on Friday and sometimes on Wednesday as needed for intensive intervention sessions. Grades 6–8 students were on campus Monday and Wednesday. Grades 9–12 operated on a trimester basis and students were on campus Tuesday and Thursday. Attendance on campus was optional. The school day was 8 hours.

Credit Recovery and Remediation Programs

Four schools provided credit recovery and remediation programs for students who struggled with or failed courses in their traditional school (see Table 3). The program at Carver Military Academy in Chicago also provided supplemental online original credit courses to all students in the school. Carver’s principal said, “Year after year, this program has gotten better for us. Chicago Public Schools measures us on many things, including graduation rate, college enrollment, and college persistence. Since we integrated FuelEd into our curriculum, we have shown significant improvements in all three metrics.”

Significant characteristics of credit recovery and remediation programs:

- All credit recovery programs implemented an instructional model based on FuelEd courses taught online by certified FuelEd teachers and complemented by on-campus teachers and paraprofessionals who worked with students face-to-face. This provided students with a two-level support system—online FuelEd teachers, who were the teachers of record and subject experts, supported by on-campus teachers to mentor, coach, and counsel students. Schools believed this model was a major factor in improving student performance. All schools saw an increase in the number of students recovering credits and in graduation rates.
- Nearly all students in these credit recovery programs completed their FuelEd online instruction in dedicated learning labs in their schools. Typically, students were also enrolled in their traditional classroom courses in the same school. Some programs scheduled students in labs during the normal school day, while in other programs students attended labs after regular school hours or on Saturday mornings. Some schools also offered credit recovery programs in summer school.
- FuelEd offers an online curriculum specifically designed for credit recovery and remediation and another curriculum designed for full-length, original credit courses. All four credit recovery programs, as well as some of the whole school programs, incorporated both FuelEd’s credit recovery courses and standard original credit curriculum within the same program. This allowed teachers—and often students—to choose which type of course best met their needs.

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- Students in credit recovery programs could choose to take online elective courses in addition to the required credit recovery courses. Williams Junior Senior High School, for example, required that credit recovery students complete two online courses, one comparable to the course they failed plus an online elective course of their choice. Williams found that this strategy helped students stay on track for graduation.
- Teachers in the credit recovery and remediation programs consistently used FuelEd student performance data to identify students in need of help and to closely monitor their progress. In some cases, teachers created new activities for students to personalize instruction for them on specific topics.

CREDIT RECOVERY AND REMEDIATION PROGRAMS HIGHLIGHTS

The credit recovery and remediation programs were programs within a traditional school designed to help students recover lost credits or improve academic performance.

FuelEd provided the primary online curriculum and educational platform.

Certified FuelEd teachers taught all the credit recovery and remediation courses.

On-campus teachers and paraprofessionals mentored, tutored, and counseled students face-to-face in school learning labs.

Table 3: Credit Recovery and Remediation Programs

School	Students in School	Students in Program	Program Staff in School	Typical Student Schedule
Carver Military Academy	502	55 credit recovery 65 supplemental online courses	1 teacher	Students took online courses in the school media lab during open class periods or online from home if they did not have an open period during the day.
John Marshall Metropolitan High School	445	160 Daytime program 30 Extended Day program 60 PASS Institute program	4 teachers 1 social worker 1 student advocate 1 security guard 1 intern 1 counselor 1 dean	Students in the Daytime program took courses in the school learning labs during one or two class periods. Students in the Extended Day program took online courses in the learning labs 4 hours per day after school. Students in PASS Institute dropout re-engagement program took online courses during the entire school day in the learning labs. The Extended Day and PASS Institute programs also included students from other Chicago Public Schools district high schools.
Williams Junior Senior High School	540	37 credit recovery, grades 9–12 50 academic recovery, grades 7–8	2 teachers 2 student mentors (Williams high school seniors)	Students took online courses in the school learning labs on Saturday mornings. They also accessed their online courses from home. High school students took courses for credit recovery and junior high students took courses for academic recovery.
Wright City Academy	419	44 credit recovery 78 summer school credit recovery 28 alt ed academy	2 teachers .33-time counselor .33-time administrator	Students in the credit-recovery program took online courses after school during the school year and during the day in summer school. Students in the alt ed academy took online courses in computer labs during the entire school day.

Outcomes Measured in Many Different Ways

The nine online and blended programs described and measured outcomes in various ways. Some gathered both quantitative and qualitative data, while others, especially newer programs, had only qualitative data.

In the whole school programs, the two most mature programs measured student achievement with a variety of tools, including DIBELS, PARCC, and NWEA Measures of Academic Progress (MAP). In one of these schools, the MAP scores for math showed that middle school students averaged 242% of typical growth, and elementary school students averaged 140% of typical growth. Both schools also had assessment data showing favorable results comparing their students with students in traditional schools in their district and state.

Other measures of success often cited by whole school programs were graduation rate, re-enrollment rate, waiting lists, parent and community involvement, teacher and student satisfaction, and, in one case, the number of students completing concurrent enrollment courses. In one whole school program, graduation rates increased from 61% to 80% in two years. For one of the newest programs, less than twelve months old, the success of the program was initially measured by a parent and student survey administered by AdvancED as part of the school's accreditation process.

For some schools an important metric was enrollment in a postsecondary school following graduation. In one whole school program, for example, 78% of the 2015 graduates enrolled in a postsecondary institution immediately following graduation. Nationally, the average was 65.9%, a number which continues to decline.

The “gold standard” measure for credit recovery programs was the percentage of credits recovered and the graduation rate. Important credit recovery program metrics also included the reduction in dropout rate, improvement in student engagement, and the ability to serve a greater number of students on flexible schedules. All four of the credit recovery programs saw improvements in credits recovered and graduation rates as well as in most of the other metrics. For example, one school doubled their graduation rate in the few years following implementation of the FuelEd curriculum. Another school reduced the number of credit deficient students from 120 to none within two years, and 100% of their students who entered that school as freshmen in the fall of 2011 graduated in the spring of 2015.

In summary, programs in all nine schools, from one year to six years of experience with FuelEd curriculum, produced educational improvement on a wide range of metrics and methodologies. Particularly impressive was that these programs improved student outcomes across a broad spectrum of students, from failing and struggling students to mainstream and advanced students seeking a different educational experience with options not available in traditional schools. There were two primary factors that accounted for the success of the students in these programs: (1) strong personal relationships between students and teachers, and (2) the comprehensive online instruction provided by FuelEd.

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Carver Military Academy

Ms. Sylvie Holt and Major S. E. Rouse

Method Schools Murrieta:

Dr. Jessica Venezia

Springs Studio for Academic Excellence

Mr. Dave Knoche and Ms. Jodi Fletcher

Crater Lake Charter Academy

Ms. Wendy Daw and Mr. Bryan Wood

Pivot Charter School Tampa

Ms. Liz Bretz

Williams Junior Senior High School

Dr. Nicholas Richter

John Marshall Metropolitan High School

Ms. Dionne Kirksey

Poudre School District Global Academy

Ms. Heather Hiebsch

Wright City Academy

Ms. Carla Woods

Carver Military Academy

Chicago, Illinois

Military discipline, thoughtful mentoring, community projects, and online original credit and credit recovery courses create a unique formula for success

Chicago Public Schools (CPS) is the third largest public school district in the U.S., with 664 schools and 397,000 students. Carver Military Academy, which is part of CPS, was the first public high school to become a public military academy. Its first class of cadets graduated in 2005. Its mission is to “provide cadets with a rigorous, inquiry-based, college preparatory curriculum that creates lifelong learners.”

Approximately 500 cadets (students) in grades 9 through 12 attend Carver Military Academy, with 93.2% from low-income families. Before integrating the Fuel Education (FuelEd) online curriculum into their original credit and credit recovery program, only 50% of the cadets graduated. In 2015, their 5-year graduation rate improved to 100%. Major Rouse, Carver’s principal, credits much of this improvement to the FuelEd curriculum.

The academy curriculum consists of four parts: instruction, JROTC training, sports and fitness, and service learning.

Academy **instruction** includes traditional face-to-face classes, Advanced Placement classes, and FuelEd online courses. The FuelEd courses include both original credit courses (which students take for first time credit) and credit recovery courses (to gain credit for previously failed courses).

Retired military personnel staff the **JROTC training**, which includes military history, leadership training, citizenship, drill and ceremony, military map reading, marksmanship, orienteering, communication, and team-building skills.

Carver cadets can participate in a variety of **sports and fitness** activities, including baseball, soccer, volleyball, and track and field. Two Carver teams—the girls’ soccer team and the boys’ basketball team—won regional championships in 2014.

Service Learning is a teaching and learning methodology that connects classroom curriculum with identified community issues and needs. The program engages students in projects that serve the community and build their social and academic capacities. CPS requires all high school students in the district to complete a minimum of 40 hours of service learning between 9th and 12th grade in order to graduate.

The graduation rate
Doubled
soon after Carver began using FuelEd online courses

SCHOOL

Type of school:
Public high school military academy

Grades:
9 through 12

Program opened:
2007

School enrollment: (Fall 2015)
502 total students
55 students *Credit recovery program*
65 students *Supplemental online courses*

Ethnicity:
54.5% *Hispanic*
44.5% *Black*
0.4% *White*
0.6% *other*

Low income:
93.2%

Program staff:
1 *Teacher / mentor*

PROGRAM

Students served:
Program within the school for selected students

Instructional models / programs:
Online learning labs in the school

Primary course type:
Credit recovery, supplemental online courses

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

FuelEd provides the curriculum and the teachers for all online original credit and credit recovery courses

Carver staff use both academic and personal criteria to accept students into the academy

Cadets study their online courses at home and in the school media center

Original credit supplemental online courses are offered to expand course offerings, which also helps attract and retain students

Cadets wear uniforms and participate in Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC) taught by retired military personnel

Diverse and Flexible Course Offerings Help Cadets Achieve Graduation Requirements

To enroll at Carver, a student must meet several entrance criteria for potential cadets, including a combined percentile of at least 48 in reading and math on the 7th grade NWEA MAP (Northwest Evaluation Association Measures of Academic Progress). Candidates must also attend an Information Session where they sign a Commitment Agreement, complete a Motivation and Perseverance Assessment and write a brief essay. Carver staff assigns points to each of these measures and selects the students who score the highest.

Principal Major Steven Rouse runs the school as a military institution. Students wear uniforms, receive military discipline if they misbehave (pushups and marching), and participate in JROTC training all four years they attend the academy.

Carver Military Academy began using FuelEd courses soon after they opened. Prior to using FuelEd, Carver instructors were teaching classroom-based credit recovery courses after school and that “was disastrous,” noted Major Rouse, “because it conflicted with sports activities and created transportation problems for students and their families.” Carver needed a different solution and found that solution with FuelEd. Carver uses the FuelEd curriculum for all credit recovery instruction and to provide original credit supplemental online courses to significantly expand course options.

Major Rouse noted, “We are a small school with limited offerings, but we need to provide a variety of courses for our students. If we’re not providing those supplemental courses for our high performing students, they may leave.” One student noted, “There are so many online classes I can take (at Carver). It looks really nice on my transcript.” Another student explained, “My dad got me into the class because I want to be a psychology major in college and the school has it online. I need it on my transcript.”

FuelEd teachers, certified in the state of Illinois, teach the credit recovery and original credit courses and are the teachers of record for all online courses. While CPS requires all high school students to complete the entire class again to recover credits, the FuelEd credit recovery instruction helps students focus on the concepts they misunderstood. That is, FuelEd credit recovery instruction uses a diagnostic-driven model with unit-level assessments that measure students’ mastery of critical concepts. This allows students to bypass topics they have mastered and focus on concepts they have yet to master. One student said, “I like taking math classes for recovery because when I answer a quiz question incorrectly, I only have to review the sections that tell me about that topic; I don’t have to go back through the parts I already know.”

Cadets sometimes study their online courses during a class period, as part of their normal daily schedule. For that class period, cadets use the school media center. If cadets’ class schedules do not accommodate an online instruction period, they study their online courses off-campus, typically at home. Many Carver cadets say they often accomplish more when working from home.

“Year after Year, This Program Has Gotten Better for Us”

Sylvia Holt, the FuelEd coordinator for Carver, is responsible for all the FuelEd instruction, both credit recovery and original, supplemental courses. She is a counselor and mentor, working with cadets individually to help them succeed. Major Rouse commented, “Sylvia knows how to pace students correctly. The key to success is the coordinator knowing the details, and having a supportive administration.”

Major Rouse believes the FuelEd program is working well for students and the school in three ways:

1. It helps students get back on track to graduate and, consequently, improves the school’s graduation rate.
2. It provides original credit course options for students, thereby keeping them in Carver (which is a school of choice).
3. It is safer for students to take courses during the normal school day rather than after school or over the summer, which would expose them to traveling after dark, or possibly commuting to schools or areas of the city they do not know well.

In describing the value of the FuelEd curriculum, Major Rouse said, “Year after year this program has gotten better for us. CPS measures us on many things, including graduation rate, college enrollment, and college persistence. Since we integrated FuelEd into our curriculum, it has produced significant improvements in all three metrics.”

Major Rouse commented, “We used to think we had to select the ‘right’ students for these online courses but that’s not really the case. We are putting all sorts of students in these courses and they are being successful.”

Cadets like the online instruction because they can go at their own pace. One student noted, “I like the online course because it shows me where I am and where I need to be”. Another student explained, “When you finish, you have a sense of accomplishment. I was scared I would not pass, and then I did. It makes other classes seem easier.”

Seniors like the online instruction because they can complete courses and pick up credits to graduate on time. Cadets who want to graduate early can take additional courses online and graduate a semester or two ahead of schedule. When cadets finish a credit recovery course before the end of the semester, they can take an original credit course.

Some Carver freshmen enroll in a “get ahead” geometry program, offered during summer school. This program consists of a FuelEd online geometry class followed by a face-to-face geometry class. These cadets then enroll in a face-to-face trigonometry course in September.

AWARDS

2013 Citywide Mock Trial **champions**

\$4 million in college scholarships awarded to graduating seniors

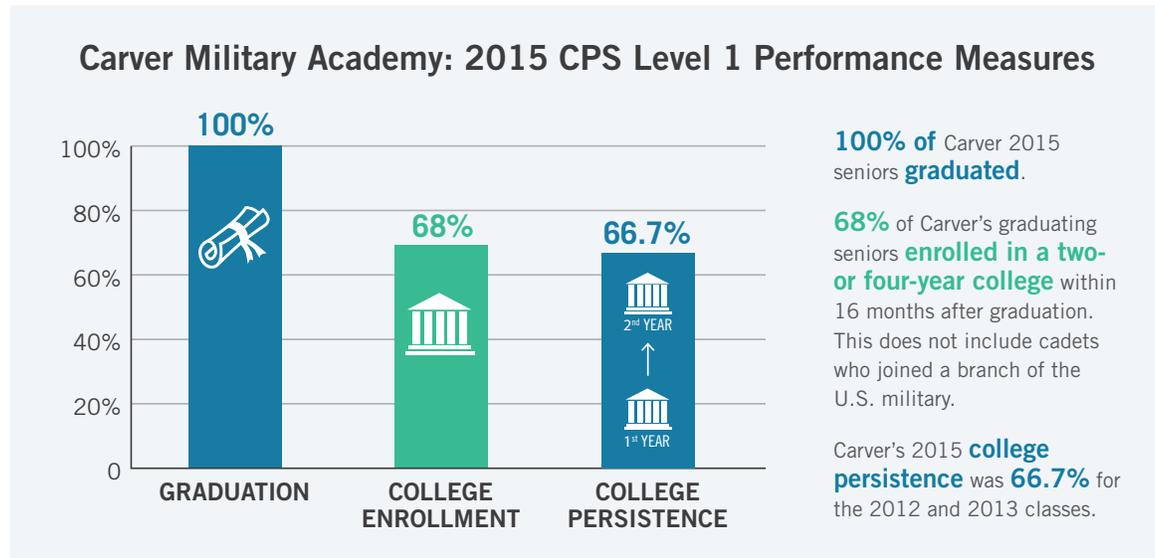
One Gates **Scholarship winner**

AP Spanish language success rate – **78%**

Dual Credit English success rate – **100%**

100% Graduation Rate: Impressive Results for Cadets and Exciting Potential for the Academy

CPS recently rated Carver Military Academy as a Level 1 school, which is one of the highest ratings a school can earn. Three factors that make up this rating include graduation rate, college enrollment, and college persistence, which is the percentage of high school graduates who start the second year of college. Carver's performance on those three factors for 2015 is as follows:



Success Is Measured in Several Ways

RECOVERED CREDITS

2013–2014:
Approximately **50% of Carver cadets** recovered credits

2014–2015:
Approximately **25% of Carver cadets** recovered credits



GRADUATION RATE

Prior to FuelEd (in 2007)



2013–2014:



2014–2015:



INDIVIDUAL SUCCESSES

A recent Carver graduate is now attending **West Point Military Academy**



FUTURE PLANS

“
I'm planning to increase the number of original credit courses offered next year and, if CPS ever stopped buying this product, I would pay for it out of the school's budget.”

– Major Rouse

BOTTOM LINE: Carver Military Academy transforms high school students into responsible cadets prepared for a variety of postsecondary challenges.

Crater Lake Charter Academy

Eagle Point, Oregon

In only their second school year, dedicated teachers use a quality online curriculum for virtual and on-campus instruction and receive high marks from students and parents

Crater Lake Charter Academy (CLCA) is a blended learning, K through 12 charter school located in Eagle Point, Oregon, serving more than 200 students in the Rogue Valley. It is chartered through Eagle Point School District 9. Students outside this school district can enroll in CLCA, which opened its doors to all Oregon students in September 2014.

During the 2013–14 school year, a small group of employees from Eagle Point School District 9 operated a virtual academy called D9 Online. For K–5 students, they used an online curriculum from K12 Inc., Fuel Education's (FuelEd) content partner. For students in grades 6–12, they used the FuelEd online curriculum. After Eagle Point School District 9 accepted the proposal for creating CLCA, the D9 Online principal, teachers, and staff joined CLCA, with an option to return to the district in the future.

Now, in its second year of operation (2015–2016), CLCA uses FuelEd courses for all students and CLCA teachers are the teachers of record for all courses except a few electives. CLCA's board decided to use local teachers because it believes face-to-face meetings between teachers and their students and between teachers and parents are an important part of each student's personalized education plan. CLCA students speak positively about their teachers:

- *"I get more help from my teachers here than at my other school."*
- *"Teachers here are nice and fun."*
- *"I have good communication with my CLCA teachers."*

CLCA offers both on-campus and virtual programs. Of the 200 students currently enrolled in CLCA, approximately 150 come to campus four days per week for six hours each day. Approximately 40 students, typically those in grades 9 through 12 (high school), come to campus less often but are still engaged in the on-campus program. The virtual program enrolls about 10 students who study online from home. Students in the virtual program come to campus only when they need one-to-one help from a CLCA teacher or staff member.

Each Student's Personalized Learning Plan Charts a Flexible Path

Eagle Point, Oregon, with a population of about 6,600, is a rural community of farms, dairies, and ranches. It is one of the three largest communities within Eagle Point School District 9. This district has about 4,200 students in one high school, three middle schools, and six elementary schools.

AdvancED
survey
question:
*"Teachers
want me
to be
successful."*

94%
of
elementary
students and

85%
of
secondary
students
agree.

SCHOOL

Type of school:
Charter school

Grades:
K through 12

Program opened:
September 2014

School enrollment: (Fall 2015)
200 students

Ethnicity:
85.25% White
9.25% Hispanic
2.5% American Indian / Alaska Native
1% Native Hawaiian / Pacific Islander
1% Black
1% Multiracial

Free / reduced-price lunch:
45%

Staff:
3.75 Teachers
4 Administrative / support

PROGRAM

Students served:
Whole school

Instructional models:
**Online and
blended classroom**

Primary course type:
Standard curriculum

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Crater Lake Charter Academy (CLCA), open to all Oregon students, enrolled their first students in September 2014, after a one-year pilot program, called D9 Online.

Fuel Education (FuelEd) provides CLCA's primary online curriculum, supplemented by Khan Academy and other digital content. CLCA instructors teach nearly all the FuelEd courses.

CLCA offers both on-campus and virtual programs. The on-campus program includes approximately 150 CLCA elementary and middle school students who come to campus from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., Monday through Thursday. Another 40 CLCA students, primarily high school students, come to campus less often but are still part of the on-campus program.

The virtual program includes 10 students, who study from home, and come to campus when they need to meet with their CLCA teachers or staff members.

CLCA teachers are on campus from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. every school day. While students are only required to be on campus 30 minutes per week, most of them are there well beyond that minimum. Students are welcome to be on campus any time the school is open.

Middle school and high school students can take classes at a traditional district school and CLCA offers on-campus, mini-courses to elementary and middle school students in subjects such as model building and guitar.

Facility. CLCA opened their original facility in September 2014 and then moved to a larger, renovated facility in September 2015. The new facility was designed specifically to support CLCA's blended learning model.

Teachers are on campus every school day from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and most teachers strongly encourage students to spend 50 minutes, twice per week, on campus. Both online and when working with students face-to-face on campus, teachers answer student questions and personalize the online instruction to address individual needs of each student. Personalization may include a one-to-one discussion between a student and a teacher or the teacher may customize a FuelEd online course for an individual student.

Students can come to campus to work on their own any time the school is open, Monday through Friday. Most students spend significantly more time on campus than the required 30 minutes per week.

For elementary and middle school students, CLCA instruction combines both online and on-campus activities. Teachers and aides create weekly pacing guides. At the beginning of each day, they provide a personalized learning plan for the day for each on-campus student. These plans include printed packets, books, and other offline materials, especially for the youngest students.

Most elementary and middle school students in the on-campus program come to the CLCA facility Monday through Thursday. On Friday, they study their online courses at home.

Each on-campus school day has specific blocks of time for math, language arts, science, and social studies. For example, the math block is from 8:00 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. During that time, elementary and middle school students may study math online in the learning center, or they may attend a small classroom lecture, discussion, or other instructional activity focused on math, e.g., Khan Academy. They may also study math topics or exercises in a paper packet or work with a teacher one-to-one to clarify topics on which they need more help.

CLCA high school students (grades 9–12) create their own schedules. Generally, high school students study online from home, though some courses have mandatory dates for attendance on campus. For example, some math courses require students to come to campus for weekly sessions. Other courses have required on-campus sessions either at the beginning of the semester, as an orientation activity, or during the semester when the teacher identifies a common misconception or misunderstanding.

CLCA high school and middle school students can also attend a traditional district school to take art, physical education, or science classes. CLCA offers elementary and middle school students on-campus, mini-classes in a variety of subjects such as model building, sewing, small engine repair, and guitar. These mini-classes are only available on campus.

Students in the virtual program study FuelEd online courses at home. CLCA teachers facilitate these courses and collaborate with students and parents online. Virtual students come to campus periodically to meet with their teachers, complete instructional activities such as laboratory experiments, and participate in social activities.

Increasing Enrollment and High Satisfaction Point to Early Success

In June 2015, CLCA had 182 students and 128 of those students returned in September 2015 (a 70% re-enrollment rate). Additionally, in September 2015, about 70 new students enrolled for the 2015 fall semester and CLCA moved into a new facility, doubling their instructional space.

AdvancED Parent and Student Survey Confirms School Year 2014–2015 was an Exceptional First Year

During the 2015 spring semester, six months after opening, CLCA began the accreditation process with AdvancED, an accrediting agency that conducts on-site external reviews of pre-K–12 schools and school systems. AdvancED works with 32,000 schools and school systems across the United States and 70 other nations to help them improve the quality of their instruction.

The following data is from the survey AdvancED conducted as part of the accreditation, with questions for elementary students, secondary (middle and high school) students, and parents. All three groups responded very positively when asked about their CLCA experiences.

AdvancED survey questions (followed by % answering positively)	Elementary students	Secondary students	Parents
 TEACHERS HELP ME (MY CHILD) PREPARE FOR THE NEXT SCHOOL YEAR	94%	94%	81%
 TEACHERS WANT ME (MY CHILD) TO BE SUCCESSFUL	94%	85%	87%
 TEACHERS PERSONALIZE THE INSTRUCTION TO MY (MY CHILD'S) NEEDS:	100%	77%	80%
 TEACHERS USE DIFFERENT RESOURCES TO HELP ME (MY CHILD) LEARN:	76%	87%	80%
 "WHAT DO YOU LIKE ABOUT CLCA?" (COMMON THEMES)	"Students can work at their own pace." "Teachers are always willing to help students." "Relaxed, friendly environment."		

BOTTOM LINE: After only two semesters in operation, CLCA is successfully meeting the needs of students and families with flexible, personalized learning programs.

John Marshall Metropolitan High School

Chicago, Illinois

Pathway to Accelerated Student Success (PASS): Three different credit recovery programs help high school students develop the academic and personal skills necessary to become productive members of their communities

In 2009, Chicago Public Schools (CPS) put Marshall Metropolitan High School on academic probation. In 2011, the Marshall staff designed and implemented Pathway to Accelerated Student Success (PASS), which consists of three credit recovery programs: Daytime, Extended Day, and the PASS Institute. In the three PASS programs, Fuel Education (FuelEd) instructors, certified in the state of Illinois, teach all of the FuelEd courses. PASS students take online courses in one of the Marshall High School computer labs every weekday.

Depending on the specific program, PASS students take their online courses at different times: PASS Daytime students take their online instruction during their normal school day. PASS Extended Day students take their online instruction between 2:45 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. every weekday and PASS Institute students take their online instruction for about seven hours every weekday.

In all three programs, on-campus Marshall PASS program teachers support, mentor, and tutor the students. Generally, the PASS teachers work with students one-to-one or in small groups. One PASS teacher commented, "We get to know each student individually and understand his or her needs. Students look forward to coming in because they know we will understand them."



Over
600

PASS
program
students
**earned their
high school
diploma**
in the past
4 years

SCHOOL

Type of school:
Public school

Grades:
9 through 12

Program opened:
February 2011

School enrollment: *(Fall 2015)*

445 whole school

160 PASS Daytime program

30 students on a rotating basis:
PASS Extended Day program

60 students (3 cohorts) on a rotating
basis: PASS Institute program

Ethnicity:

98.1% Black

1.6% Hispanic

0.3% other

Low income:

91.3%

Program staff:

4 Teachers

1 Social worker

1 Student advocate

1 Security guard

1 Intern

1 Counselor

1 Dean

PROGRAM

Students served:

**Programs within the school
for selected students**

Instructional models / programs:

**Online learning labs
in the school**

Primary course type:

Credit recovery

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Pathway to Accelerated Student Success (PASS): Three different programs to help struggling students recover credits and earn their diploma taking online courses in one of the Marshall High School computer labs

PASS Daytime Credit Recovery

- Current Marshall students, needing to recover credits, take online instruction for one or two class periods each day

PASS Extended Day Credit Recovery

- Students needing to recover credits take online courses from 2:45 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. daily
- Participants include students from Marshall and other Chicago Public High Schools (CPHS) as well as dropouts who work during the day and must attend this program, rather than the Institute Drop-out Re-engagement program

PASS Institute Drop-out Re-engagement

- Students come from all over the city
- Three seven-hour sessions per day; students attend only one session
- Strong emphasis on helping students be successful in all aspects of their lives, including on-the-job training, social and emotional counseling, parental training, resume writing and postsecondary preparation

At least one Marshall High School teacher staffs each lab to provide individual tutoring and support for each PASS student

FuelEd provides the online courses and online teachers for all three PASS programs

PASS Programs Improve the Graduation Rate, Reduce the Dropout Rate, and Improve Student Motivation

CPS is the third largest public school district in the country, with 664 schools and about 397,000 students. Marshall High School has approximately 445 students, in grades 9 through 12. More than 91% of Marshall High School students come from low-income families and, as Table 1 indicates, nearly 96% of PASS students suffer from some type of bereavement stress. Overall, the data in Table 1 indicates most PASS students face numerous social and personal challenges that could easily interfere with their education. Accordingly, the PASS program offers a multitude of services to these students, such as parental training, grief groups, and personal counseling. A PASS student said, “One of the main reasons I stopped coming to school was because I was pregnant. I lost all my ambition; I gave up. Now I actually love school. I want to further my education, even after high school. PASS helped me a lot.”

Table 1: PASS Student Demographics on Stressors

Demographic	Percent of PASS program students
Have children	40.8%
Employed	28.6%
Gang affiliations	42.9%
IEP	34.7%
Formerly incarcerated or on parole	53.1%
Chronically truant	57.1%
Struggling reader	32.7%
Anger issues	71.4%
Incarcerated	4.1%
Pregnant or recently had a baby	32.7%
Hospitalized or institutionalized	24.5%
Bereavement	95.9%

When the Marshall staff designed and implemented the three PASS programs, in February 2011, their goal was to address not only their academic probation status with CPS but also the common challenges experienced by many of their students. Thus, two of the three PASS programs are open to struggling high school students across the entire CPS district.

The PASS instructional model consists of three major components: FuelEd online courses, FuelEd online teachers, and four Marshall teachers who tutor, mentor, and support PASS students. A critical element of PASS, especially the Extended Day and the Institute programs, is the relationship Marshall teachers and staff develop with their students. They hold students accountable for their actions and behaviors and help them take responsibility for their future. “A core value for us is building positive relationships with our assigned students,” notes a PASS teacher.

Table 2: PASS Credit Recovery Programs

Program Attribute	Daytime	Extended Day	PASS Institute
Access to the computer lab	Open access for all students	PASS students only	PASS students only
When students take FuelEd courses	Up to three class periods per day	2:45 p.m. to 7:00 p.m., weekdays	7 hours every weekday
Types of students needing to recover credits	Marshall students	Marshall and other CPS high school students, as well as dropouts for whom this time works better than the Institute times	CPS students who are significantly behind in credits or have dropped out of school and are less than 21 years old
Criteria for exiting the program	End of the semester	When student recovers all necessary credits	When student recovers all necessary credits
Course completion	It is CPS policy that high school students who fail a class must complete the entire class again to recover credit.		

Because Marshall High School students need 24 credits to graduate, the primary goal of each PASS program is to help students earn those credits and receive their diploma. One PASS student said, “This was good because it showed that the school cared if I graduated. I had a rough junior year and fell behind, and now I have caught up and will graduate on time.”

Another goal of the PASS programs is to provide a path for training or education after graduation. Thus, before students receive their diploma they must provide an acceptance letter from a trade school, community college, or other postsecondary institution.

PASS Daytime Credit Recovery is a program for current Marshall students who take their FuelEd online courses for one or two class periods each day in one of the computer labs (see Table 2). Students who complete their assigned FuelEd instruction before the end of the semester continue in the computer lab and take an online elective during their assigned PASS class period. One PASS student noted, “Finishing the online classes in a reasonable time period allowed me to earn the credit I needed and then take the electives I wanted, like art.”

PASS Extended Day Credit Recovery is a program for both Marshall students and students from other CPS district high schools (see Table 2). Specifically, this program is for students not enrolled full-time in high school but want a high school diploma, or are enrolled full-time in a high school but cannot fit a credit recovery course into their schedule. This program also serves some students who have dropped out and would normally enroll in the PASS Institute but find that the Extended Day schedule better meets their needs.

Students in the Extended Day program work on their assigned online courses from 2:45 p.m. to 7:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. They may complete a FuelEd course in a few weeks or they may need the entire semester. When students complete their online instruction, they exit the program.

Students in both the Extended Day and Institute programs follow a dress code and are required to contact their PASS instructor if they cannot attend school on any given day. One PASS staff member notes, “Each of the adults in the PASS program holds their assigned students accountable for attendance, coursework, and behavior. We require them to be responsible for all aspects of their own growth and development.”

PASS Institute is a program to re-engage students who have dropped out of school and provide them with a path to high school graduation (see Table 2). Sometimes students fall well behind and enter the Institute before they drop out. If students are older than 21, they can enroll in a city college that has a diploma program for older students who have not graduated from high school.

To enroll in the PASS Institute, students must have at least 10 credits toward the 24 credits required for graduation. Counselors work with students to create a graduation plan and estimate how long it will take them to earn their diploma. Students usually start their online instruction with subjects they feel the most confident about and take one course at a time.

MARSHALL POINTS TO KEY PRACTICES THAT WORK

1. Relationship building:

PASS students develop strong relationships with PASS staff members, who hold students accountable and help them take responsibility for their own personal growth and development.

2. Peer-to-Peer mentoring:

PASS students develop a sense of community and self-worth when they mentor another PASS student. Sometimes students' peers can reach them more quickly and effectively than an adult.

3. FuelEd online

courses: Comprehensive and rigorous FuelEd courses enable students to work at their own pace and discover their own learning preferences, strengths, and weaknesses.

4. Wraparound services:

The variety of support, services, and individual attention that PASS students receive is critical for helping them mature and achieve academic success.

There are three PASS Institute cohorts and two daily sessions. Two cohorts arrive at 8:00 a.m. and leave at 3:12 p.m. The third cohort arrives at 8:48 a.m. and stays until 4:06 p.m. Students receive a mid-day lunch and typically will interact with at least one PASS teacher, counselor, or other adult several times every day.

The Institute offers a variety of off-campus options to help the students succeed.

For example, students can go to:

- A local business to learn on-the-job skills
- Columbia College to learn how to make and record their own music
- Urban Threads to learn fashion design
- BLUE1647 to learn computer skills, e.g., how to make drones and assemble and disassemble computers

Services offered to PASS Institute students include a day care facility for teen parents, social and emotional counseling, peer-to-peer mentoring, grief groups, parental training, and workshops on resume writing and interview skills. PASS Institute students also earn stipends for active participation in life skills and workforce training.

The Institute helps students find places to live if they are homeless and collaborates with numerous city agencies to provide extensive services. One student raved about PASS saying, "PASS not only helped me with school, but they are my family. They helped me get through hard times and work hard to graduate. I am proud to say I am the first in my family (to graduate)!"

The PASS Institute is at capacity most of the year and retention is high. About 90% of PASS Institute students finish high school in a year or less. Two Institute students praised this program, saying essentially that PASS gave them a second chance to graduate. They are not only motivated to finish high school but also to set goals for furthering their education.





Four Years of PASS Programs Produce Impressive Results

From 2011 to 2015, PASS has provided thousands of Chicago Public High School students the opportunity to recover credits, meet graduation requirements, and move on to postsecondary education. The four key practices (described on the previous page) have evolved into a powerful, integrated system that gives students hope and opportunities they never thought they would have.

Successful High School Graduation and Beyond (2011–2015)

CREDITS RECOVERED

PASS students recovered **more than 2,000 credits** over the past 4 years



DIPLOMAS EARNED

More than 600 PASS students earned their high school diploma (June 2011 through August 2015)



GRADUATION RATES

85% of PASS Extended Day students graduated



90% of PASS Institute students finished the program and graduated in a year or less



POSTSECONDARY ENROLLMENT

83% of PASS Institute students attend a postsecondary institution



AWARDS / OUTCOMES

Chicago Public Schools cited Marshall Metropolitan High School as

“A turnaround school that has revitalized its curriculum, culture, and climate, and is showing clear gains as a result. Students receive the supports necessary to be academically successful.”

BOTTOM LINE:

The PASS programs enable Chicago Public High School students to earn a diploma and acquire life skills that will help them become productive members of their communities.

Method Schools Murrieta

Murrieta, California

Quality online instruction, project-based learning, extensive student performance data, and dedicated teachers combine to create a bright future for this second-year school

Method School of Murrieta is one of three Method Schools, all located in Southern California. Method Schools are independent study charter schools, which, by California law, do not require full-time attendance as do traditional schools. The Method Murrieta and San Diego campuses opened in August 2014, and the Arcadia campus opened in August 2015. The Method Murrieta campus is in Murrieta California, which is a community of approximately 400,000 between Los Angeles and San Diego.

Method Schools combine online learning with projects and teachers who know each student's needs. Students analyze real-world problems, working on projects that integrate math and science or English and history. The principal, Dr. Jessica Venezia, explains, "The value of project-based learning is that students acquire and apply new knowledge in an authentic, problem-solving context."

All Method students take online courses from FuelEd. Method teachers teach all online courses; the one exception is that FuelEd instructors teach the online second-year language courses.

When students are on campus, they work on their projects, study online, and participate in Focused Direct Instruction (FDI) sessions, which are small group discussions, demonstrations, or lectures, lasting no more than 20 minutes. Method teachers use a variety of student performance data to dynamically group students into FDI sessions.

Two Tracks of Data-Driven, Project-based Learning

Method Schools are student-centered and data-driven. Teachers use data from FuelEd and a comprehensive diagnostic and benchmark assessment tool, along with their own observations, to identify who needs one-to-one attention or an FDI session. Typically, a Method teacher will group students into an FDI session because they need instructional reinforcement on the same topic. Sometimes, however, a teacher creates an FDI session because a few students are asking thought-provoking questions in an online discussion and the teacher thinks a face-to-face discussion will enhance their understanding of the topic. Most students spend about 30% of their on-campus time in various FDI sessions.

Method Schools use data from the STAR Math and Reading assessments to determine each student's initial placement in courses. Dr. Jessica Venezia notes, "While no assessment is perfect, we believe this program provides us with the best chance to successfully match students with the perfect curriculum and pace."

Renaissance STAR reading assessment scores for all Method Murrieta students showed an average of

50%
growth

for the first quarter of SY 2015 (August–October 2015)

SCHOOL

Type of school:
Charter school

Grades:
K through 12

Program opened:
August 2014

School enrollment: *(Fall 2015)*
75 students

Ethnicity:
51% White
19% Hispanic
5% Asian
3% American Indian
3% Black
19% declined to answer

Low income:
35%

Staff:
6 Teachers
5 Administrative / support

PROGRAM

Students served:
Whole school

Instructional models:
Online, blended, project-based

Primary course type:
Standard curriculum

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

There are three Method Schools with campuses in San Diego, Arcadia, and Murrieta. This case focuses on the Murrieta campus.

Method Schools are independent study, charter schools, which means the criteria for their state funding is both attendance and “work turned in.”

There are two tracks: iRotate and iFlex. Students in the iRotate track are on campus two, three or four days per week. Students in the iFlex track are virtual students or only on campus one day per week.

Project-based learning (PBL) is one of the primary instructional strategies. Method teachers regularly add projects to the Fuel Education (FuelEd) online curriculum.

Short-cycle projects take individual students 1 to 4 weeks to complete. Students can complete several short-cycle projects in one semester.

Method teachers use student performance data to select students for Focused Direct Instruction (FDI) sessions—20-minute mini-lectures, discussions, or demonstrations.

Method teachers are the instructors for both online and on-campus courses, with the exception of online second year languages, which FuelEd instructors teach.

Method teachers also use the STAR data to develop a personalized instructional roadmap. Students retake this assessment quarterly to measure their growth.

Dr. Venezia believes collecting and analyzing student performance data is critical. “At Method, we measure everything! Regular assessments and close monitoring of student performance allow us to modify pacing and instructional content for each student.” Method uses three levels of assessment for their K–8 students: 5-minute oral exams, unit assessments, and semester exams.

Project-based learning (PBL) is the instructional strategy Method Schools use to ensure learning is relevant, interesting, and challenging. By challenging students to answer meaningful questions about real-world problems, PBL provides relevance that increases engagement and retention of the content. Method teachers also believe that PBL provides increased opportunities to use technology to connect with experts, partners, and audiences around the world, and to find resources and information related to each project. Two of the six Method Murrieta instructors have extensive experience in designing and implementing PBL. Students report they like the projects, especially the group projects.

Methodville project. Methodville was a group project for grades 3 through 5, in which students explored the differences between urban, suburban, and rural landscapes. Students built models of their ideal planned community and described the various challenges that occur with each type of land use. At the culmination of this project, students hosted an exhibition for their parents.

Short-cycle projects. Many projects at Method Schools are individual projects, called “short-cycle projects,” that take students one to four weeks to complete. Each short-cycle project includes a checklist students use to assess their own work. An essential part of each project is a short essay students write to reflect on what they learned, the obstacles they faced, and how they overcame those obstacles. This reflection statement may also include a description of what the student would do differently, if that student were to repeat the project.

Method Schools offer the following two tracks for their students:

1. iRotate students are on campus 2, 3 or 4 days per week from 8:30 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. iRotate students take FuelEd courses at home and when they come to campus, they participate in FDI sessions that complement what they are learning online.
2. iFlex is a fully supported virtual track, typically for home-based students, students in the entertainment industry, or students for whom attending a traditional school is difficult. iFlex students take FuelEd courses and communicate with their Method teachers via interactive web conferencing sessions and face-to-face meetings. The iFlex track is available to students in San Diego, Riverside, Orange, Los Angeles and Imperial counties.

When students are not on campus, they interact with their teachers, via email, text messaging and phones, studying online at least four hours per day. Many students say they like working online with FuelEd courses because they can go at their own pace or because this style of instruction is effective and comfortable for them. Students can switch between iRotate and iFlex after discussing the change with their Method Schools teacher.

On-campus activities. The primary purpose of the on-campus experience is for students to receive instructional support, to develop critical thinking skills, and to learn how to listen to and respect others. FDI sessions and group projects address these three on-campus experiences. Students often participate in two or three FDI sessions each day they are on campus. When they are not participating in an FDI session, students spend their on-campus time working online or on their projects.

According to Dr. Venezia, “Students frequently communicate with their teachers online and tell their parents they love coming to school. Parents also say they like the school because it provides a safe environment, both physically and emotionally.”

Online content and tools. Method Schools’ kindergarten through fifth grade students use online courses provided by K12 Inc., FuelEd’s content partner. These courses contain animations, game simulations, videos, and avatars as well as hands-on materials (e.g., science equipment, art supplies and maps) integrated into the online curriculum. The math and reading courses include adaptive strategies to customize the instruction to the student’s skill and knowledge levels. One student said she liked the online instruction because if she did not do well on a quiz, her teacher allowed her to study what she missed and then re-take the quiz.

Method students in grades 6 through 12 use the FuelEd online courses. These courses include a variety of media, such as videos, simulations, avatars and interactive graphics that enhance the instruction.

Success Comes from Good Data, FDI Sessions, PBL and One-to-one Discussions between Students and Teachers

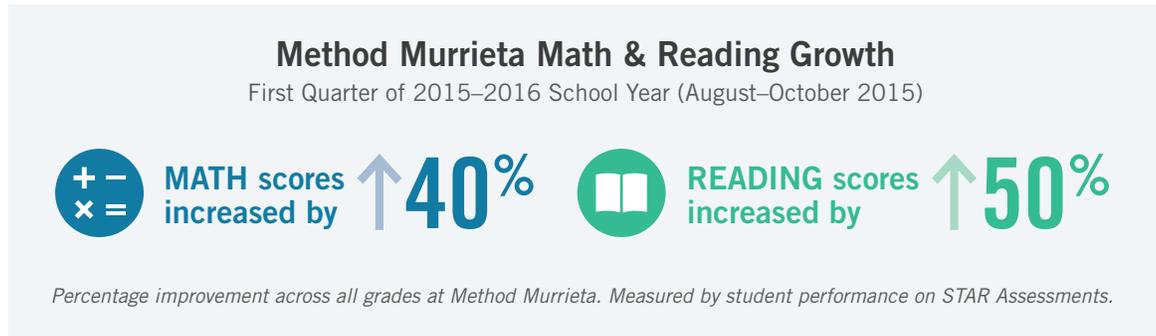
Dr. Venezia points to six best practices that make Method Schools and their students successful.

- **Initial assessment of students:** We need to know exactly where to place a student to maximize the probability the student will be successful.
- **Collecting student performance data:** We use growth charts to document successes and intervene with a new strategy if a student is not progressing. We use data to set benchmarks and identify students for FDI sessions.
- **Oral assessments:** Our teachers frequently talk with students to determine if the data from the online assessments reflect actual student performance.
- **FDI sessions:** Teachers discuss one topic, with no more than eight students, for no more than 20 minutes, to either to clarify misunderstandings or elaborate on the topic.
- **Project-based learning:** Tying authentic projects to instructional content helps students contextualize the content and make it meaningful. We are working this year (2015–2016) to tie projects to specific instructional objectives.
- **Student-teacher interactions:** Whether online or on-campus, students and teachers communicate daily. They talk about the content, the projects, the student’s personal life, the student’s assessments, and the student’s online work. Students know their teacher is there for them and willing to help them in any way possible.

Results from Method Murrieta's First Year Suggest a Bright and Promising Future

The 2014–2015 school year was the first year of operation for the Method Schools Murrieta. Even with this short history, the accomplishments are notable, not only in terms in test scores but also in terms of making a big difference in the lives of their students.

Just during the short first quarter of the 2015–2016 school year STAR Math scores improved by 40% and reading scores increased by 50%.



Promising Signs of Success after Only One School Year

RETENTION

70% of students from SY 2014–2015 **re-enrolled** in the fall of 2015

70%



STUDENT ACHIEVES TWO YEARS OF GROWTH IN READING AND MATH

One student started at the Murrieta campus, on its first day of operation in 2014, as a 6th grade student. All of her prior education was in a traditional public elementary school of approximately 800 students. This student did well in the traditional school and her reading and math scores usually met grade level standards, but she wanted to try a different type of school hoping to find a more comfortable fit. **During her first year at the Murrieta campus, this student achieved almost two years of academic growth, performing at an 8th grade level in both reading and math.**

When asked about her accomplishments, she said **working at her own pace, being in small classes, and getting to know her teachers and other students well** helped her achieve these strong academic results.



STUDENT GROWS SOCIALLY, EMOTIONALLY, AND ACADEMICALLY

A student who struggled with anxiety and other social issues came to the Murrieta campus from a traditional middle school. She enrolled as an 8th grader, but she was reading at a 6th grade level and her math skills tested at a 1st grade level.

At the beginning of the school year, this student was very quiet, choosing to sit away from others, writing and sketching in her journal. **By the end of the school year, this student was reading at an 8th grade level and her math skills improved to a 5th grade level.** She became an independent learner, using weekly schedules to manage her studies and keep herself on pace.

She also **grew socially and emotionally, making friends** with some of her Murrieta classmates. She feels **more confident and comfortable at school and is able to talk with her teachers and ask for help**, which is a significant change from where she was when she enrolled at Method Murrieta.

BOTTOM LINE:

The future for Method Schools looks bright as they integrate project-based learning into online and on-campus instruction.

Pivot Charter School Tampa

Tampa, Florida

Pivot Charter School students wear shirts of different colors to distinguish middle schoolers from high schoolers, but students across all grades are alike in their outstanding academic growth

Pivot Charter School Tampa (PCS), serving students in sixth through twelfth grades, is a site-based charter school in Tampa, Florida, that employs a blended learning model, combining one-to-one teaching with a traditional education environment. To improve and strengthen its instructional program, in 2014 it converted to the Fuel Education (FuelEd) online curriculum and the FuelEd Anywhere Learning System (ALS). The Hillsborough school district in Tampa, the eighth largest school district in the United States, sponsored Pivot Charter School because it wanted a blended learning option located within the district, where students could work at their own pace and take elective courses not offered at their traditional middle or senior high schools.

From August 2011 through June 2015, PCS improved academic outcomes according to a variety of measures. From June 2014 to August 2014, PCS's retention rate was 78%, which improved to 81% from June 2015 to August 2015. PCS's graduation rate increased from 61% in 2013 to 80% in 2015.

PCS uses FuelEd courses as the core of its curriculum. The FuelEd curriculum allows PCS teachers to enhance the educational experience by customizing and supplementing online content with a variety of instructional strategies and tools to meet the individual needs of each student. PCS teachers are the online course facilitators and teachers of record for most of the online courses. Certified online FuelEd teachers facilitate most Advanced Placement (AP) and language courses.

Graduation
rate
increased
from
61%
in 2013 to
80%
in 2015



SCHOOL

Type of school:
Charter school

Grades:
6 through 12

Program opened:
August 2011

School enrollment: *(Fall 2015)*
300 students

Ethnicity:
47.5% White
27.6% Hispanic
15.2% Black
7.6% Multiracial
1.4% Asian
0.7% American Indian

Free / reduced-price lunch:
28% *(SY 2015–2016)*

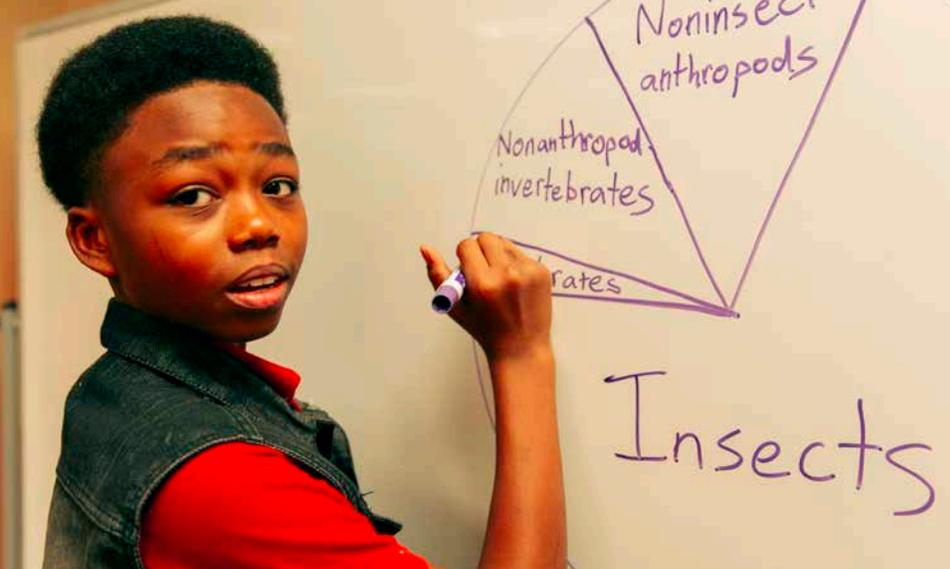
Staff:
13 Teachers
1 Counselor
2 Administrative / support
1 Attendance clerk
1 Registrar

PROGRAM

Students served:
Whole school

Instructional model:
**Online, blended,
traditional classroom**

Primary course type:
Standard curriculum



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Pivot Charter School (PCS) began using the FuelEd curriculum in January 2014.

Students attend one or more of three daily sessions, and are on campus for about five hours each day.

Students move to different classrooms every 90 minutes and have assigned seats and laptops in each classroom. The teacher in each classroom is responsible for a specific subject.

PCS has a dress code—middle school students wear red shirts and high school students wear black shirts.

PCS students and teachers work well together, creating a positive environment in which teachers expect students to succeed and students expect teachers to personalize the instruction to meet their needs, skills, and abilities.

Students Move to Different Classrooms Every 90 Minutes

According to principal Liz Bretz, the PCS instructional model cultivates student responsibility and students say they like taking the responsibility of working at their own pace and managing their own schedules. They also say that to be successful at PCS, they have to go at a steady pace and plan ahead. Principal Bretz also notes that the model enables teachers to focus on their tutoring and mentoring responsibilities to individualize the instruction to the unique needs of each PCS student.

Students attend one of three sessions at the PCS facility. Sessions are offered from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., 9:30 a.m. to 2:40 p.m. or the afternoon session from 11:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., placing all students in school during the middle of the day to satisfy attendance requirements.

Students rotate every 90 minutes to a different classroom, where they have assigned seats and laptops. Each student has a “home room” where teachers take attendance and make announcements. Students do not carry laptops from room to room, and they do not take laptops home. Each classroom focuses on a specific subject, and the teacher in each classroom is the teacher of record for that course.

Students are required to take a minimum of six courses (3 credit hours) per semester, and they need 24 credits to graduate. While some students are comfortable taking six courses simultaneously, other students work with their teachers to develop a program where, for example, they focus on one or two courses at a time. To help students meet the goal of graduating on time, PCS teachers work with students to establish a pacing schedule that keeps them on track. Students can also work ahead, either on campus or at home.

PCS has a dress code. Middle school students wear red shirts and high school students wear black shirts. Students can pay \$1 to wear something different on Friday. That money goes into a fund for student activities, fieldtrips, and charities. PCS teachers and staff believe this dress code increases the respect students have for themselves and other students.



Students enroll in PCS for a variety of reasons, including desiring a smaller, more personalized learning environment than offered in the very large, traditional district schools. Other students like the flexibility of the PCS schedule, which allows them more time to pursue other interests such as athletics.

PCS teachers get to know their students personally and students respond well to that attention. One student said, “Teachers here care a lot more. They are nice people. They want us to do well on tests and be successful. They are very caring.” A PCS teacher noted, “I have a lot more time to get to know my students. We have very few discipline problems here. It is a positive place.” Another teacher said, “Sometimes students who performed poorly at a traditional school do great here. This is an excellent place for those students, as well as self-starters.”

One of the weekly tasks for each PCS teacher is to send a “positive card” to the parent of each student. A positive card briefly describes something a student did that week that was positive, impressive, or unexpected.

PCS teachers and staff believe every student can be successful. Their mission is to create a unique learning environment in which students learn to believe in themselves, excel at their goals, and discover pathways to a successful and fulfilling life.

According to Principal Bretz, PCS is a college prep school focused on helping each student develop a career plan. PCS pays for the tuition and books when students enroll in dual credit courses at the local community college. To be eligible for dual credit courses, PCS students must have at least 12 (out of a total 24) credits towards graduation and a 3.0 GPA.

The belief in individual success also applies to the PCS teachers. They report that they work well together, are concerned about each other, and enjoy the flexibility they have to work as a team to help individual students. Teachers also report that they like helping each other, an activity supported by the uniform structure of the FuelEd curriculum.

Online Content and Instructional Tools

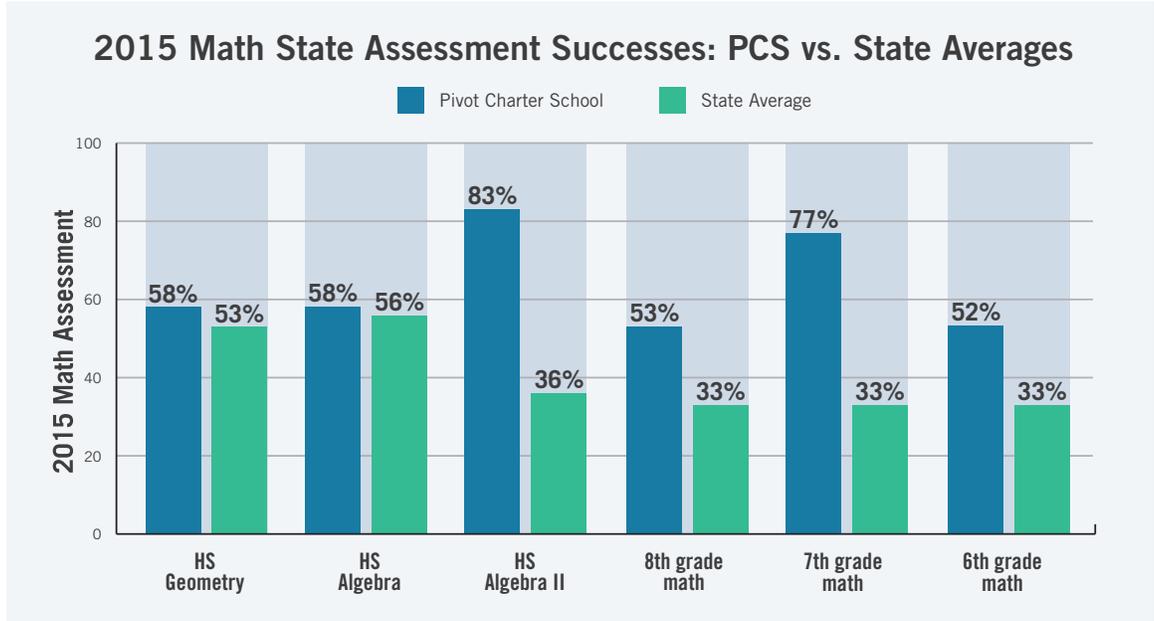
As the basis of the online learning environment, PCS uses the FuelEd Anywhere Learning System and the FuelEd online course curriculum for grades 6–12, supplemented by electives and career-readiness courses from FuelEd’s partner, eDynamic Learning. Students access their courses through PEAK, the FuelEd learning platform. For teachers, PEAK provides important actionable data to help monitor student progress and adjust the instructional path as needed. Parents can also access PEAK to monitor their students’ progress.

PCS began using FuelEd in January 2014. PCS teachers like the capability provided by FuelEd to customize courses in various ways, such as adding links to YouTube videos or video demonstrations they create themselves, or adding resources created by other teachers in the school.

Improved Student Achievement and Graduation Rates

Principal Bretz is proud of what PCS has accomplished in four years, including the comradery of the staff, the positive culture in the school, and the significant improvements in student achievement and graduation rates. She commented, “The staff is always looking for ways to improve instruction and student achievement. We all work for what’s best for our students, helping them take responsibility for their learning and their behavior.”

PCS students have demonstrated significant improvements in their math skills. For example, PCS high school students increased their passing rate on the geometry state assessment by 34 percentage points in one year, from 24% in 2014 to 58% in 2015. The graph below shows additional math improvements.



Success Indicators: 2013 through 2015

ACADEMIC GROWTH 2013–2014

One of just 55 Florida high schools showing academic growth



One of just 2 Hillsborough County high schools showing academic growth

STATE WRITING ASSESSMENT IMPROVEMENT FOR 10TH GRADERS

76% passed in 2014
33% passed in 2013



GRADUATION RATE IMPROVEMENT

2014–2015
5 year graduation rate

80%

2013–2014
5 year graduation rate

73%

2012–2013
4 year graduation rate

61%

BOTTOM LINE:

Pivot Charter School Tampa combines a blended learning model, using FuelEd online curriculum, with many traditional school characteristics, producing academic success across all grade levels.

Poudre School District Global Academy

Fort Collins, Colorado

Dedicated educators, parental involvement and quality online curriculum work together to create big success

Poudre School District Global Academy (PGA) is one of 59 schools in the Poudre School District, which has a total enrollment of almost 30,000. PGA began as an all-virtual K–12 school in 2009, focusing on students who were struggling in a traditional school. From 2010 through 2013, PGA evolved into a school for any student who needed or wanted a non-traditional educational experience, attracting advanced and accelerated students as well.

In 2014, PGA moved away from the all-virtual instructional model. Students now spend two days per week in the school building working with their teachers and other students in various instructional activities. The on-campus experience involves teachers working with groups and individual students based on need and progress. Students also engage in individual online learning on campus, where they are face-to-face with teachers and other students for mentoring and collaboration.

PGA teamed with Fuel Education (FuelEd) for its online courses, learning platforms, and teachers for some of its elective courses. PGA's teachers facilitate and customize the online curriculum, develop offline curriculum, and use actionable data to guide student paths and personalize the learning experience for each PGA student. This new, integrated online and on-campus model (see Figure 1) has resulted in strong personal relationships between teachers and students and impressive growth in student achievement. One teacher excitedly noted, "Students are doing more and getting more out of it than they were in the regular, full week seat-time program."

An integral part of the teaching and learning model is that parents coach and mentor their students during the three days students are working on their assignments at home. Parents access assignments online, communicate with PGA teachers, and sign off on work students complete at home. PGA developed a training program to teach parents how to be effective learning coaches and mentors.

Learning on Campus and at Home

Learning occurs both at home and in the school building, i.e., on campus. Students are on campus two days per week and studying online from home the other three days. On-campus schedules vary by grade level (see Table 1 on the next page).

FuelEd and its content partner K12 Inc. provide most of the online courses and related content, which students access both on and off campus, providing continuity across the entire learning life cycle.

Heather Hiebsch, PGA's principal, points to three keys to growth in student achievement:

- *Comprehensive and well-designed student performance reports from Fuel Education*
- *One-to-one mentoring that teachers provide each student*
- *The parental or guardian role as learning coaches*

Academic Progress:

240%
of typical growth



SCHOOL

Type of school:
Public school

Grades:
K through 12

Program opened:
August 2009

School enrollment: (Spring 2015)
160 students

Ethnicity:
85.2% White
12.4% Hispanic
1.8% Two races
0.6% Asian

Free / reduced-price lunch:
38.9%

Staff:
12 Teachers
7 Administrative / support

PROGRAM

Students served:
Whole school

Instructional models:
Online, blended, traditional classroom

Primary course type:
Standard curriculum

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Students study online at home 3 days per week and on campus 2 days per week

Students take FuelEd and K12 Inc. courses both at home and on campus

Approximately 60% of all instruction for K–8 students is online and 80% is online for 9th–12th grade students

PGA teachers are both the on-campus and online teachers

Online teachers for world language courses and several electives are provided by FuelEd

Students and teachers meet and interact face-to-face in dynamic and flexible individual and group settings

PGA trains parents how to mentor students at home

PGA is a learning community in which relationships are central to student success

PGA occupies a traditional school building in a residential community of Fort Collins, Colorado. The dichotomy of this traditional looking, former elementary school building and the revolutionary approach to K–12 instruction is striking. The school appears to house traditional classrooms with orderly rows of desk and chairs. Once students and teachers arrive, however, it is obvious that there is nothing traditional about this instructional model (see Figure 1). Students and teachers re-organize the furniture to accommodate students on the move with laptops in backpacks participating in dynamic study groups. A small group of students sits on the floor working with a teacher on a project in one part of a classroom, while other students are at tables with their laptops for math exercises.

PGA staff believes in retaining many of the social aspects of the traditional school experience. They take advantage of the on-campus days to create a sense of school spirit, community and tradition. They have a school mascot, host various social activities, and have school logoed clothes and other items in their school store.

Table 1: Typical Weekly Schedule

Day of week	On campus	At home	Office hours & other activities
Monday		All students studying online	
Tuesday	All K–12 students on campus WIN sessions (see note 1)		Fine arts day for grades K–8
Wednesday	Grades 9–12 on campus STEM enrichment activities and Yearbook SST meetings for K–5 students (see note 2)	K–8 students studying online	Optional teacher office hours for grades 6–8
Thursday	K–8 students on campus WIN sessions (see note 1)	Grades 9–12 students studying online	Optional teacher office hours for grades 9–12 Physical education day for grades K–8
Friday	Teacher professional development, collaboration, and SST meetings (see note 2)	All students studying online	

Note 1: WIN is What-I-Need sessions. There are 17 WIN sessions each week, organized by subject area.

Note 2: SST is Student Support Team. There is a SST for each grade and the goal of an SST meeting is to identify students who need extra help, review supporting data, and discuss intervention strategies.

Teachers, Parents, FuelEd – A Winning Combination

PGA's teachers and parents collaborate to teach and mentor students throughout the week. Teachers teach classes on campus on a prescribed schedule (see Table 1) and coach and tutor students both on campus and online. Parents mentor and work with students at home to augment and support teachers. The learning experience is strong because of the teacher-parent team and the focus on individual student success.

PGA teachers are responsible for on-campus instruction, as well as facilitating students' online courses. They monitor the online work of individual students and provide suggestions, encouragement, and learning strategies. On campus, teachers work with small groups of students, or with individual students, to ensure each student is successful and meeting his or her growth goals.

To meet students' needs, PGA teachers collaborate to customize online and classroom instruction. They often personalize the online content or develop original instruction. "FuelEd isn't an expert in what my teacher needs in a given course, in terms of

relationships, structure, order, flow for PGA students, AND our teachers aren't experts at creating media-rich content, like video and graphics. Each does what they do best and work together in the most effective way," said Heather Hiebsch, Principal.

FuelEd provides all the online courses and certified teachers for electives such as world language and Advanced Placement courses. While PGA teachers are responsible for teaching all core courses, both online and on campus, FuelEd online teachers facilitate courses when PGA needs teachers for electives.

Parents are an integral part of the teaching team. Students' parents or other responsible adults are actively involved in mentoring and tutoring at PGA. As students move into higher grade levels, parental involvement gradually changes and decreases somewhat. For example, parents of K-3 students are delivering instruction, tutoring, and providing feedback, while parents of students in grades 4 and 5 are less involved in delivering instruction but they still are required to review and sign off on student work. By grades 4 and 5, students are learning to become independent learners. In the upper grades, parents monitor learning at home and communicate with teachers as needed.

When asked about how his parents help him, one middle school student said, his mom reviews his English papers and will write something like "Unclear" but she won't tell him how to fix it. He has to figure that out.

Parents or other responsible adults learn to be effective learning coaches by participating in the following training sessions:

- Learning Coach (parent) Mentorship Program – Current successful learning coaches (parents) mentor new families
- Jump Start Week – The first week of school all parents practice activities such as scheduling a conference with their child's teacher or emailing their learning coach mentor
- Orientation – A half day on-campus session in which parents discuss PGA policies and expectations, meet with teachers and learn to log into the online system to review student grades and assignments
- Learning Coach Academy – An optional monthly update session for K-8 parents

Figure 1: PGA Teaching and Learning Model

Online Content and Instructional Tools

PSD Global Academy Online Courses Self-paced & facilitated by PGA & FuelEd teachers	At Home Days Parents & other adults (learning coaches) mentor students at home	Online Individual time with online instruction, 1 hour / day / course, collaboration between students & teachers
		Offline Tutoring, reviewing, collaboration between students & parents
	On Campus at School Days PGA teachers use multiple instructional strategies	Classroom Lectures, demonstrations, quizzes, student presentations, discussions
		Small groups Labs, projects, discussions, clubs, community service
		Online Blended learning setting, individual online time, collaboration with others
		1:1 Tutoring, mentoring, counseling, personalizing instructional content

PGA uses a variety of content and instructional resources on campus to complement and support the online FuelEd courses.

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND SATISFACTION

PGA fosters a **culture of growth**: Students are excited about their own academic growth and enjoy monitoring their progress in weekly growth conferences.

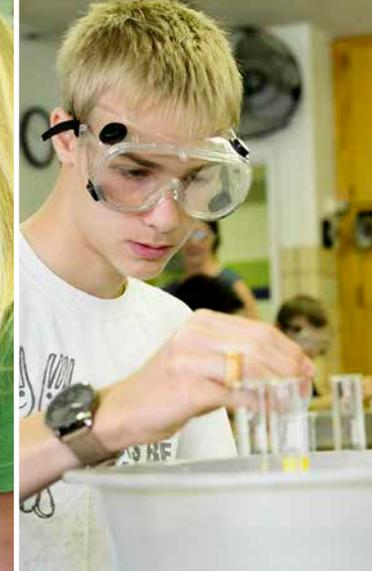
Student satisfaction: Students know their teachers both academically and personally. There is a **sense of family**.

Teacher satisfaction: Teachers frequently collaborate to help students meet their growth goals and they **know their students both academically and personally**. PGA feels like family.

About 50% of high school students come to PGA because **they want a smaller school**.

PGA is a "last stop" for some students but they report it often **renews their interest in learning and education**.

Students like the flexibility of learning at their own pace and **controlling their own learning**.



AWARDS

PGA teacher received the Colorado Online & Blended Teacher of the Year (2015)

National Transformation Award School (2014)

Top 5% of all Colorado Schools for Student Growth (2013-2014)

PGA counselor received Colorado Online & Blended Counselor of the Year (2013)

Named “District of Distinction” program (March 2015 District Administration magazine)

Nationally recognized as an APQC K–12 Best Practices School (2010)

FuelEd course content is available to students 24/7. Students take online teacher-led courses at home, and when they come to campus, they are in a learning environment in which face-to-face instruction and online learning combine into an integrated and synergistic system.

K–8 students use the K12 Inc. K–8 curriculum, with its Online School (OLS) course management tool. These courses also include supplemental materials such as science equipment and maps. OLS provides a continually updated view of student progress for teachers, parents, and students. Students say they like checking the system to see their own performance data and progress.

The 6–8th graders use some content from the FuelEd Middle school catalog in combination with other district approved and adopted programs.

For grades 9–12, PGA uses FuelEd’s Full-Time School (FTS) Comprehensive Program, which includes multiple academic levels: core, comprehensive, honors and Advanced Placement, remediation, and credit recovery. The FTS curriculum also includes 75 STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) courses.

In addition to the FuelEd courses, high school students take some online courses developed by teachers in Poudre School District. The district’s Blackboard learning management system hosts both the FuelEd content and the in-house courses, giving students a “homeroom” feel for all of their courses.

When PGA developed its evaluation criteria for the digital learning component of its program, they wanted a unified catalog of robust and rigorous courses for all grades and a learning platform to effectively manage learning and provide meaningful and actionable student data. They also wanted a primary provider, with a proven track record, who offered a wide range of support and service options that included most, if not all, of the solution. With these criteria in mind, PGA selected FuelEd and its content partner, K12. “FuelEd listens to us, and has evolved their products and services based on our feedback,” said Principal Hiebsch.

Devices used by students and teachers consist of tablets (primarily for students in the lower grades) and laptops to access online courses and for related instructional management and administrative functions. Portability of the laptops and tablets is critical so students can carry their devices with them as they move throughout the school for group meetings, labs and other activities. PGA provides devices at school for all students and middle and high school students can take their devices home.

School as Community

The PGA motto is “global education—local community.” The global part of this motto is that PGA connects their students with students in other schools, other states, and other countries.

Each year, PGA students build local ties by participating in community-based projects. The PGA Student Council works with the student body to choose student-led community service projects each school year, e.g., Colorado State University Cans Around the Oval, the McBackpack Weekend Meal program, and the United Way Make-A-Difference Week.

PGA is a casual environment. Teachers often sit on the floor with their students to plan activities or work on team projects. They have fun days such as “Super Hero” day when students and teachers dress up as their favorite super hero.

Clubs. Students participate in book, chess, craft, robotics, and yoga clubs. They also can participate in school committees such as student council, an elective yearbook course, and prom. National Honor Society and National Junior Honor Society are available to students who meet the requirements. High school students can participate in sports offered at other high schools. One PGA student is on the wrestling team of a nearby Poudre district high school and is nationally ranked. Other student athletes participate in football, basketball, swimming and other team sports.

Relationships. Teachers believe the strong positive relationships built through the school community are one of the main reasons for PGA’s success. When asked why the PGA model works so well, they said,

- The small size of the school fosters more “community” and collaboration. Everybody knows everybody.
- Our relationships with parents or guardians, with each other and with our students.
- We all feel like a close part of the team—we like to work here.
- We are all “on board” with the mission and priorities.

Principal Hiebsch said students used to think of PGA as a supplement or part-time part of their education, but now they think of PGA as their school. “This is **their** school.”

Six Years of Success

Over the six years of PGA’s existence, PGA’s definition of success and their goals have evolved at a fast pace. Principal Hiebsch and her staff embrace change. They focus on continuous improvement and are always looking for new ways to help students achieve success. PGA’s core values and actionable data, both quantitative and qualitative, drive their decisions about change. Data from FuelEd platforms, combined with qualitative data from teachers, students, and parents are critical to the PGA continuous improvement mission.

PSD Global Academy Core Instructional Values

PGA uses five core values to drive instructional decisions. They ground every instructional practice, activity, and goal in one or more of these core values.

Build strong positive relationships among students and teachers

- Students and teachers report that their relationships with each other are a source of high satisfaction with PGA and their own self-worth.
- Students say they take tests seriously and want to do the best they can for themselves and their teachers.

Strive to continuously improve the instructional model

- Changed from an all-virtual school to a combination of virtual and on-campus school.
- Teachers regularly collaborate to identify new strategies for individualizing instruction.

Strive toward personalizing learning

- Teachers dynamically group elementary students into three main groups on Tuesday and Thursday, based on K12’s K–8 course progress data and their discussions with and observations of each student, on Mondays and Wednesdays.
- For students in grades 9–12, teachers combine student performance data from FuelEd and other course reports with their weekly discussions with individual students to personalize the instruction to ensure that each student is challenged and successful every week.

Embrace a growth mindset for both teachers and students

- Weekly student-teacher, one-on-one “Growth Conferences.”
- Teachers regularly combine data from multiple sources to measure growth and guide instruction. Data are from several sources, including weekly teacher-based assessments, K12’s K–8 course reports, FuelEd reports, and NWEA MAP (Northwest Evaluation Association: Measures of Academic Progress®).

Develop responsible and independent learners

- Starting in grade 4, students begin learning to be independent learners and kindergarteners learn how to self-assess.
- Students report one reason they re-enroll at PGA is because they have more control of their learning, in terms of both schedule and style.

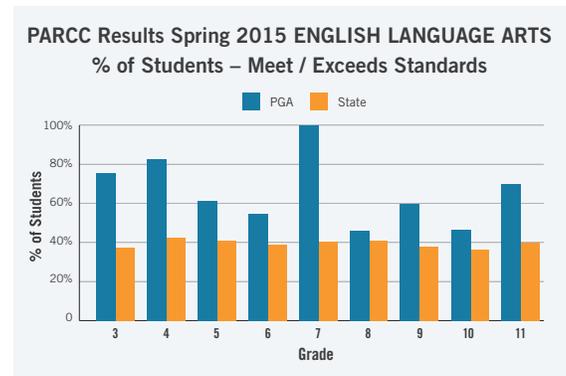
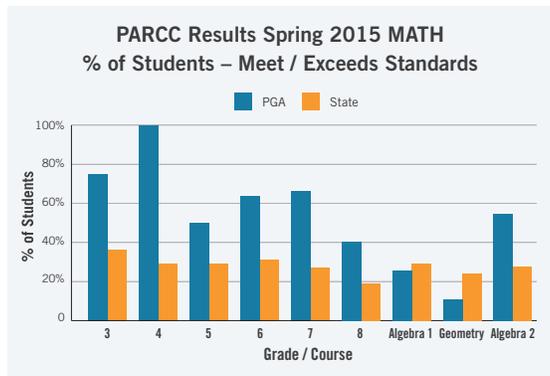
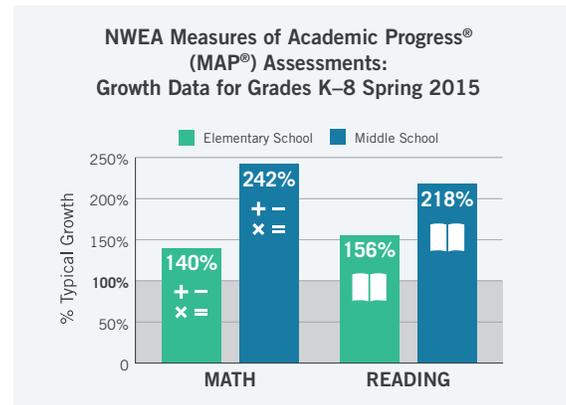
Balanced Program Produces Exceptional Results

“When the kids are here at school, the instruction is broader, using more capabilities of the [online] courses. Both teachers and paraprofessionals work directly with the kids. At home, students have more focused lessons that keep them on a more defined but flexible path.”

– Heather Hiebsch, PGA Principal

On the math **NWEA assessment**, measuring growth from Fall 2014 to Spring 2015, PGA elementary school students averaged 140% of typical growth and middle school students averaged 242% of typical growth. In reading, PGA elementary school students averaged 156% of typical growth and middle school students averaged 218% of typical growth.

On the math **PARCC assessment**, taken by students spring 2015, PGA students out-performed state averages on 7 out of the 9 assessments. On the ELA (English Language Arts) assessments, PGA students out-performed state averages at every grade level.



Success Includes Several Ingredients (2014–2015)

RETENTION AND REPUTATION

There is a **wait list** for all grade levels K–12

80%+

80%+ of the Spring 2015 students **re-enrolled** for the Fall 2015 semester

COURSE COMPLETION



The number of high school students held back a grade **dropped by nearly two-thirds**—from 19 down to 7

Teachers report the **highest course passing rate in PGA school history** for grades 9–12 in English, Math, Social Studies, and Science

INDIVIDUAL SUCCESSES



One IEP student achieved a **2.5-year growth**

One high school student completed the CNA nurse assistant program at Front Range Community College (FRCC) and **earned the FRCC Outstanding Student Award**

CONCURRENT ENROLLMENT

10% of PGA high school students participated in concurrent enrollment programs, **earning a total of 50 college credits**

One PGA student **outperformed all the college students** enrolled in Chemistry II Lab earning an A+

BOTTOM LINE:

PSD Global Academy is a synergetic system in which *“the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.”*

Springs Studio for Academic Excellence

Colorado Springs, Colorado

Students thrive in a unique learning studio facility designed around project-based blended learning

Springs Studio for Academic Excellence (SSAE), formerly called Falcon Virtual Academy, is a K through 12 public school located in Colorado Springs, Colorado, serving more than 500 students. It is part of the Falcon School District D49, which spans both urban and rural areas of northeast Colorado Springs. D49 currently serves more than 19,000 students and is the fastest growing school district in Colorado's Pikes Peak region, and one of the fastest growing in the state. The district is one of Colorado's only two recognized Districts of Innovation.

SSAE provides alternative education opportunities unavailable to students in traditional schools. The core of the SSAE instructional model combines online, blended, and project-based learning, facilitated by dedicated SSAE teachers, working with students in an open and innovative brick-and-mortar facility. SSAE custom-designed this former warehouse to offer students and their families a highly engaging, experiential and personalized learning experience.

Fuel Education (FuelEd) provides the online curriculum and learning platform. SSAE teachers facilitate nearly all of the FuelEd online courses with the exception of most world language courses and some electives, which are facilitated by FuelEd teachers.

SSAE students learn via FuelEd courses, face-to-face instruction, tutoring from SSAE teachers, and experiential, project-based activities. The SSAE experiential learning strategy includes field trips, internships, designing habitats, and other project-related activities.

Over its first five years of operation (2010–2015), SSAE evolved from a virtual school to a studio model where students, teachers, and staff have created an innovative learning community. SSAE has consistently produced excellent student outcomes and, while students are not required to attend on-campus classes, most of them rarely miss a day.

78%
of the
2014–2015
graduates
went directly
to college
following
graduation



SCHOOL

Type of school:
Public school

Grades:
K through 12

Program opened:
Fall 2010

School enrollment: (Fall 2015)
521 total students

84 K–5 students
141 Grades 6–8 students
296 Grades 9–12 students

Ethnicity:
70% White
9.2% Hispanic
6.1% Multi-racial
5.5% Black
1.2% Asian
8% Unknown

Staff:
12 Teachers
1 Art teacher
2 Special Education teachers
2 Specialized Student Coaches (Special Education)
.75 Advanced learning facilitator (gifted and talented teacher)
3 Student Support Coaches
2 Counselors
5 Administrative / support

PROGRAM

Students served:
Whole school

Instructional models:
Online, blended, project-based

Primary course type:
Standard curriculum

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Springs Studio for Academic Excellence (SSAE) is an online school with blended opportunities

While students are not required to attend classes on campus (they may take classes virtually), 88% of the students attend regularly because they want to

The school facility is a highly innovative, open-space design that supports SSAE's learning studio philosophy

Students take all courses through the school's online learning curriculum, provided by Fuel Education and its content partner K12 Inc., accessible to students at home and on campus

SSAE teachers facilitate both on-campus and online instruction

FuelEd provides online teachers for most world language courses and several electives

Full-time Student Support Coaches (SSC) mentor, support and counsel students and are a key component of SSAE's success

Every student has the use of a laptop computer while on campus

SSAE high school operates on a trimester schedule, aligning with the school district's standard school year, and grades K–8 operate on a standard semester schedule

Learning Studio Instructional Model

The principal of SSAE, Dave Knoche, is enthusiastic about the evolution of their program from an online instructional model to a flexible, blended learning studio model. "Students coming into the building are at least 30% more successful. Kids want a place where they can work directly with teachers and be part of a community of students who share their school spirit. Similarly, teachers want to get to know their students on a personal, face-to-face basis."

In the learning studio instructional model students have the option to learn on campus or at home. Students progress at their own pace, guided by a personalized learning plan developed in conjunction with their parents, teachers, and counselors. Teachers, who often work one-to-one or with small groups of students, can customize the online FuelEd courses to meet the specific needs of their students. Teachers often work with students on the experiential, project-based part of the curriculum.

In typical studios, novices learn by working with experts and practicing their skills. At SSAE, students learn by working with teachers and peers who are experts in specific topics. Students refine their skills through practice, and demonstrate proficiency while teachers and peers provide guidance and feedback. This practice-feedback process occurs both in face-to-face interactions and in online interactions.

Project-based learning (PBL) is a major focus for SSAE at all grade levels. The SSAE teachers use a PBL learning model on which they were trained by an expert PBL organization. SSAE teachers carefully plan the projects to span multiple subject areas and engage small groups of students in real-life situations. For example, the environmental science class worked on a collaborative project with Colorado Care and the Share Food Bank to design and manage a community garden.

Online courses from FuelEd provide a common instructional and content thread across all SSAE learning modalities—virtual learning, blended learning, and project-based learning. Similarly, SSAE teachers provide the instruction to all students across all modalities.

Personalized learning plan. SSAE, along with the entire school district, is implementing the new Colorado Individual Career & Academic Plan (ICAP) to document and manage personalized learning. ICAP is a multi-year process guiding students and families in the exploration of career, academic and postsecondary opportunities. Starting in sixth grade, students—with the support of teachers, counselors and their families—develop their own pathways to be college- and career-ready. Dave Knoche notes, "We are setting kids on individual paths that support their passions."

Personalized Schedules Facilitate Student Teacher Relationships

SSAE high school operates on a trimester basis, 12 weeks each, aligning with the district's standard school year, while grades K–8 operate on a standard two-semester basis. High school students typically complete core subject courses during the first and second



trimester, reserving the third trimester for electives, independent study or to make up courses. This strategy helps most students stay on track for graduation and enables some students to graduate early.

To optimize school resources—including space, teachers, student support coaches, staff, and technology—students in different grade levels are on campus different days of the week (see Table 1).

Table 1: Standard SSAE Weekly Schedule

Grade Level	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Elementary K–5	Study online at home	Study online at home	On campus, intensive intervention groups	Study online at home	On-campus iLearning sessions
Middle School 6–8	On campus	Study online at home	On campus	Study online at home	Study online at home
High School* 9–12	Online at home or concurrent enrollment	On campus	Online at home or concurrent enrollment	On campus	Online at home or concurrent enrollment

* Grade 9–12 students come to campus only for activities that support their personalized learning plans or on the advice of their SSAE teachers or coaches. Concurrent enrollment classes typically meet Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

Elementary school students. On Fridays, K–5 students come to the campus to participate in iLearning courses. These on-campus only courses combine project-based online activities with face-to-face group activities so students have the opportunity to work with their SSAE teachers and student peers.

Based on student performance data, students in need of assistance come to campus on Wednesday for small group intensive intervention sessions. On Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday, K–5 students work at home with their parents, taking courses online and interacting online with their SSAE teachers. The teachers closely monitor their progress based on feedback from the parents and the FuelEd student performance reports.

Inspired by the Colorado READ Act, SSAE implemented a concentrated program for students in grades K through 3 who are reading below grade level. The goal of this program is to ensure students are reading at grade level by the end of the third grade. Jodi Fletcher, the SSAE assistant principal who led the implementation of this program, explains, “We’ve implemented this program within our online and blended model and are showing strong growth, especially with our dyslexic population. Our K–5 reading scores are going up exponentially.”

Students are not required to come to the school facility—but most students do and count it as a critical reason they succeed.

Originally, all of the students were 100% virtual; all their courses were taken online and there were no face-to-face options. Now, 12% of the students are 100% virtual and many of these students do not live in the Colorado Springs area.

The community atmosphere at SSAE is what attracts students. Dave Knoche notes, “On a scale of 1 to 5, we are a 5 in what we’ve accomplished with the community of students and parents. The relationship between school, students and families is paramount to a successful educational experience, and we work hard to insure our students and their parents feel comfortable and accepted by our teachers and staff.”

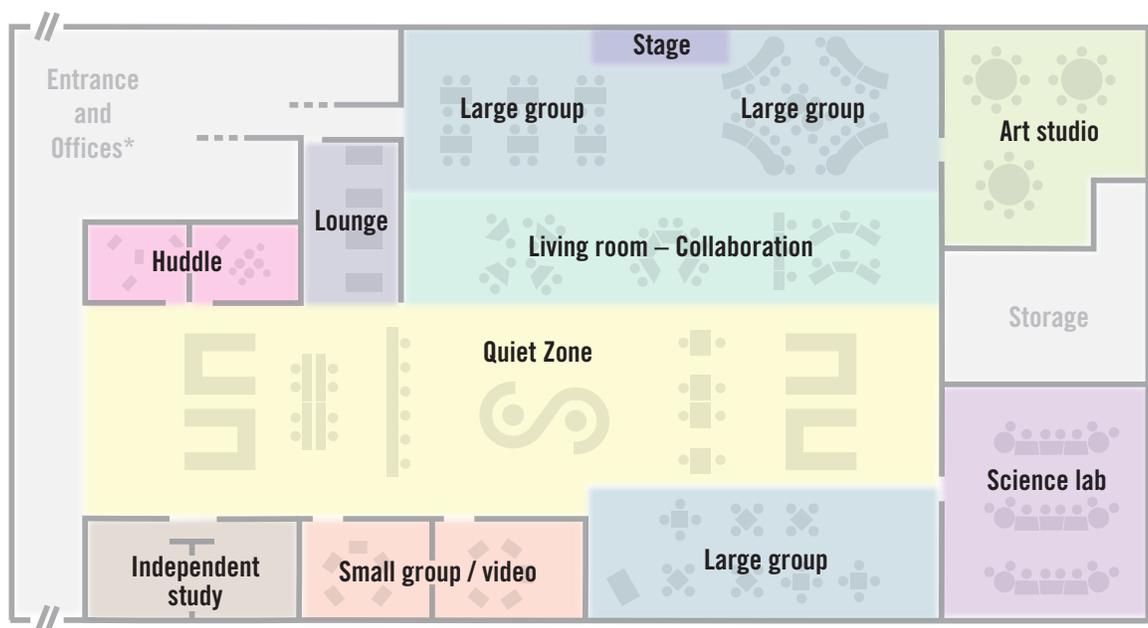
Middle school students. On Mondays and Wednesdays, students in grades 6, 7, and 8 come to campus. Many of the on-campus activities include project-based and blended learning sessions in small and large groups. SSAE teachers strongly believe their middle school students benefit from this rigorous blended learning model, which builds rapport between students and teachers. Students and parents are extremely pleased with this model—more than 95% of middle school students regularly come to campus on Mondays and Wednesdays.

High school students. While students in grades 9–12 may come to campus on Tuesdays and Thursdays, most high school students are self-directed and come to campus only for activities that directly support their personalized learning plans or on the advice of their SSAE teachers or student support coaches. SSAE teachers and counselors encourage their high school students to take concurrent enrollment courses because, as Dave Knoche notes, “We’ve eliminated virtually all Advanced Placement courses and encourage kids to take concurrent enrollment as their high-end academic option.”

School Designed for Studio-based Learning

An architectural design firm helped SSAE transform a single-story warehouse building into a modular setting that teachers and students can reconfigure for different instructional activities. Some spaces are the same as those found in a traditional school such as the **art studio** and **science lab**. Other spaces are small, partially enclosed **huddle areas** with large monitors and interactive presentation technology, enabling small groups to work together and share digital content. Enclosed **quiet meeting rooms** and **specialty areas** also provide spaces for small group meetings. Small groups can also meet at one of the **collaboration tables**. The **quiet zone** contains many secluded areas for individual student study. There is also a **living room** space that students typically use for socializing, as well as a **lounge** space that parents and family members use while waiting for students. In the open space, there is a **stage** for music and performing arts productions.

Figure 1: Springs Studio – 21,000-Square-Foot Open-Space Design



** This figure shows relationships between instructional areas; the Entrance and Offices section is not to scale.*

Teachers, Student Support Coaches, and Parents

The learning studio instructional model is effective because of the way it models the best aspects of traditional dance and art studios. In the studio model:

- personal relationships between novices and experts—students and teachers—are critical
- portfolios document the skills and accomplishments of students
- students develop plans to help them achieve their goals
- students learn and improve their skills based on personalized feedback from teachers and peers

SSAE teachers. SSAE teachers instruct students using a variety of modalities and in different settings. For on-campus activities, teachers give traditional classroom presentations and assign traditional laboratory exercises. Math and science teachers often convene large groups of students from different grade levels who are studying similar content. A major part of their time is spent tutoring and mentoring students individually and in small groups. Teachers use student performance data from the FuelEd system and ACT Aspire, along with their own professional judgment, to identify specific types of instruction and interventions for individual students.

In addition to on-campus teaching, SSAE teachers also facilitate the online FuelEd courses, often customizing FuelEd courses for individual students to help them align their assignments with personal learning plans and project-based learning activities. Six SSAE teachers, called Lead Sherpas, partner with counselors to advise students on academic and career paths, and two Special Education teachers work with about 50 students.

FuelEd teachers. Colorado-certified FuelEd teachers facilitate most of the world language courses as well as a number of elective courses. FuelEd's extensive catalog of courses and state-certified online teachers significantly extend the learning opportunities for SSAE students, while allowing SSAE teachers to focus on core subject areas.

Student Support Coaches. Five full-time student support coaches (SSC) are on campus every school day to mentor, support, and counsel students. Assistant Principal Jodi Fletcher says, "Student Support Coaches are the first-line defense for struggling students who need more individualized support. They coach students, monitor their progress, and help them stay focused and motivated. Most SSCs are aspiring teachers with strong technology skills or undergraduate or graduate-level students enrolled in university education programs."

Springs Studio for Academic Excellence— What's in a Name?

In the fall of 2010, SSAE opened as Falcon Virtual Academy. It started as an online-only school with 59 students. The teachers and staff soon realized they wanted to enrich the educational experience with a brick-and-mortar school building community to support a personalized and blended learning model.

Over the next five years, as the instructional model evolved, they saw that students were learning, and teachers teaching, in what looked more and more like a professional studio setting. "When students come to our campus," notes principal Knoche, "what they are doing is similar to working in a professional studio where they have wide-open spaces and are actively involved with each other. They are practicing and honing their skills and working with and learning from the professionals who are there to mentor students and model the skills they are learning."

As in an art or dance studio, teachers help each student develop a customized learning plan and then work with them to implement that plan. When planning how to approach their assignments, students work at their own pace, frequently deciding what to do, when to do it, and with whom to work.

With the addition of the studio-like blended option, the "virtual" part of the school's original name no longer told the whole story. And the school is located in Colorado Springs, a city usually referred to as "the Springs." So, in the fall of 2015, they decided to change the name from Falcon Virtual Academy to Springs Studio for Academic Excellence (SSAE).

"A studio atmosphere encompasses what we want to do with kids," states Dave Knoche. "We want to provide opportunities for kids that they would not encounter in traditional schools and allow them to spring forward in whatever direction they're looking to go. This is a place for kids to come, interact, and be highly engaged."

In the SSAE setting, learning is enhanced because students are part of a cohesive community of young people, working with and helping each other.



SCHOOL AWARDS

Summit Merit Award for Outstanding Design in Renovation, and the People’s Choice Award – Council of Educational Facilities Planners International (2012)

Children’s Playstructures & Recreation – Facebook \$20,000 playground contest winner (2014)

Pennies for Patients: Leukemia and Lymphoma Society Gold Award Winner (2013/2014)

TEACHER AND STAFF AWARDS

Principal – D49 Administrator of the Year (2012)

Colorado Online Teacher of the Year (2013)

Colorado Teacher of the Year Semi-Finalist (2014)

Colorado Online Counselor of the Year (2015)

District D49 Teacher of the Year (2015)

STUDENT AWARDS

Wendy’s High School Heisman (2015)

\$20,000 Academic & Equestrian Scholarship – West Texas A&M Univ. (2015)

Falcon Education Foundation Scholarship (2014)

Pre-Professional Program for Colorado Ballet (2015)

Colorado 1st Team – Cross Country and Track and Field (2015)

Parents and families. Parents are a critical component of the SSAE success. “In our K–5 parent-driven model, we hold parents fully accountable to SSAE’s academic standards,” notes Dave Knoche. To prepare parents for this responsibility, SSAE provides a comprehensive onboarding program, which both parents and students are required to attend.

Digital Learning Content and Tools

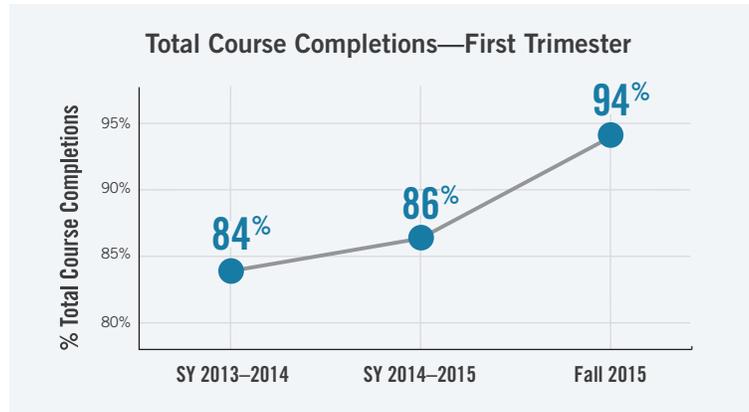
From the beginning, SSAE has partnered with FuelEd for all their online courses and content. Dave Knoche praises this relationship, noting that, “It is the combination of FuelEd products, support services, and product enhancements that enables us to function at a high level. They are a great partner, providing good training for the staff and listening to our feedback. They are willing to change to accommodate our needs.”

Principal Knoche also notes that the online courses from FuelEd work equally well for students taking all or most of their courses online, as they do for the students who participate in the on-campus, project-based blended learning experience. Two other key benefits of the FuelEd curriculum, according to Dave, are that teachers can customize the courses and that the student performance data provide the specifics teachers need to personalize instruction for their students.

LearnBop, a math tutoring system, is another FuelEd product SSAE uses. Dave Knoche notes, “We see a lot of potential in LearnBop and are excited about what it can do. It is changing the way kids think about math. Kids like it and are even requesting it.” SSAE also uses FuelEd’s Anywhere Learning System (ALS) courseware for remediation activities.

In the Sixth Year, Evolving and Innovative Teaching and Learning Models Yield Remarkable Results

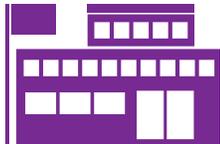
From the fall trimester of 2013 (SSAE's fourth year of operation) to the fall trimester of 2015, course completion rates improved from 84% to 94%—and student scores have significantly exceeded state and national averages. SSAE attributes this to its fully integrated studio design, best-in-class teaching staff, and the online and blended teaching and learning models.



Success Is Measured in Many Different Ways (Spring 2015–Fall 2015)

RETENTION AND REPUTATION

There is currently a **wait list for all grade levels**



82% of Spring 2015 students **re-enrolled** for the Fall 2015

Students on campus at least 2 times per week:

83% Grades K–5
91% Grades 6–8

84%+ attendance in concurrent enrollment courses Grades 9–12

DIBELS K–5 READING

75% of all SSAE K–3 Colorado READ Act students showed **above typical growth** on DIBELS Next from beginning of year to middle of year benchmark testing

56% of all K–5 students showed **above typical growth** on DIBELS Next from beginning of year to middle of year benchmark testing

20% reduction of “significant reading deficiency” from beginning of year to middle of year benchmark testing

24% increase of 5th graders performing at benchmark (52% to 76%)

PARCC ASSESSMENTS



3rd graders outperformed the state and PARCC Consortium in English language arts

6th, 7th and 9th graders outperformed the district and state in English language arts

6th graders outperformed the district, state and PARCC Consortium in mathematics

10th and 11th graders outperformed the district, state and PARCC Consortium in English language arts

COLLEGE READINESS

Concurrent enrollment credits achieved:

28 in Fall 2013
39 in Spring 2014
133 in Fall 2015

26% of seniors and **21%** of juniors **completed concurrent enrollment courses** (Fall 2015)

One 2014–2015 graduate earned 48 concurrent enrollment credits while attending SSAE

78% of 2014–2015 SSAE **graduates enrolled in college** the following semester

With more than five years of experience developing an integrated studio-based teaching and learning system, and with the support of a highly involved community of students and parents, SSAE's program is producing students ready for the future.

BOTTOM LINE:

Williams Junior Senior High School

Williams, California

Successful online programs for at-risk junior and senior high school students keep them in school, on track and on target to graduate

Williams Junior Senior High School has about 540 students in grades 7 through 12. Over 90% of all students qualify for free or reduced-price lunches, and over 60% of the high school students are English Language Learners. In August 2012, one-third of the high school students were credit deficient and the credit recovery program was ineffective. To help overcome these academic challenges, in May 2013, the staff implemented two new online learning programs—an academic recovery program for junior high students and a credit recovery program for high school students. Their goal was to keep students on track, in school, and on target to graduate.

Dr. Nicholas Richter, the principal, and his staff know it is essential to intervene as soon as they identify a student who is struggling; they do not want to let even first semester seventh graders get behind. Accordingly, intervention begins with an academic recovery program for junior high seventh and eighth grade students who are failing or falling behind in their studies. These junior high students enroll in the Williams academic recovery program and are required to take full online courses comparable to the courses they failed.

Similarly, high school students enroll in the Williams credit recovery program, starting the semester after they failed a traditional semester-equivalent course. However, for high school students, in addition to taking a course to recover credit, they must also enroll in an online elective course to help ensure they stay on track for graduation.

Fuel Education (FuelEd) provides all online courses for both of these programs. Williams' two dedicated recovery program teachers provide one-to-one tutoring for students, who take their online courses in one of two computer labs in the school. Students in the two programs attend their traditional classes during the week and study their online courses in the school computer labs every Saturday morning. Students can also access their courses from home.

Rural School Challenges: Many English Language Learners and Low Income Families

Williams, California, a town of about 5,000 residents, is located about 55 miles north of Sacramento along Interstate 5 in California's Central Valley. Like many towns in the Central Valley, Williams has a long history of agriculture and seasonal jobs associated with fieldwork, cannery, nut processing, and rice mills.

All schools in Williams Unified School District (WUSD) are located on a single 49-acre campus, consisting of one primary elementary school (grades K–3), one upper elementary school (grades 4–6), and one junior senior high school (grades 7–12).

In June 2015

no high school students were credit deficient & all but one junior high student was promoted to high school

SCHOOL

Type of school:
Public school

Grades:
7 through 12

Program opened:
May 2013

School enrollment: *(Spring 2015)*

540 students

37 Grades 9–12

Credit recovery program

50 Grades 7–8

Academic recovery program

Ethnicity:

81% *Hispanic*

4.9% *White*

1.8% *declined to answer*

0.6% *other*

Free / reduced-price lunch:
92%

Program staff:

2 *Teachers*

2 *High school seniors as mentors*

PROGRAM

Students served:

Program within the school for selected students

Instructional model:

Online learning labs in the school

Course types:

Credit recovery & academic recovery

CREDIT RECOVERY EXAMPLE

Sofia is a sophomore at Williams Junior Senior High School. She only earned 52% in her fall semester math class. Dr. Richter meets with Sofia and her parents to explain the credit recovery program. He tells them that starting at the beginning of the spring semester, every Saturday morning Sofia will come to the Williams online learning lab to take a credit recovery math course plus she will take a FuelEd elective course of her choice.

In January, Sofia starts her online elective photography course and the credit recovery math course. In the labs she has access to two sets of teachers who will teach and mentor her every step of the way: the online FuelEd teachers and the Williams recovery program teachers, in addition to the senior student mentors. The FuelEd teachers communicate with Sofia online and the Williams teachers and student mentors work with Sofia face-to-face in the computer lab. Sofia continues to attend her regular classes during the week as usual during the semester. When the semester comes to a close Sofia will have recovered credit for her math course, earned credit for the elective photography course, and will have completed all her regular classroom courses.

There are approximately 1,320 students enrolled in kindergarten through twelfth grade in this district. The student population consists of high percentages of students from low-income families and English Language Learners (ELL).

When Dr. Richter became the principal of Williams Junior Senior High School in August of 2012, 30% of all high school students were credit deficient. Dr. Richter explained that there was a variety of reasons for students falling behind. Some of these students were simply bored and not engaged in their classes. Other students struggled with certain academic subjects. Another group of students was still learning English and found it difficult to keep pace in their classes as they tried to learn both a new language and a new academic subject.

Saturday Mornings: Online Instruction and Face-to-Face Tutoring for Junior and Senior High School Students

Each Saturday morning, students work at their own pace in one of the two computer labs in Williams Jr. Sr. High School. Williams recovery program teachers are always there to work with and mentor students. Additionally, two Williams's high school seniors are in the labs to tutor students.

Dr. Richter states that this approach to assisting at-risk students “shifts responsibility to the student and most students respond well. They like accessing their assigned instruction on their own time, sometimes from home. They also like being able to check their performance and progress in the FuelEd platform. Students, who know they are close to completion, sometimes study after school in the computer lab. They are excited about their success and being caught-up.” One student noted, “I like being able to watch the videos. It really helps me to be able to pause the videos and play the same segment several times if I get distracted the first time or am a little confused.”

One important feature of the FuelEd courses that Dr. Richter thinks helps both students and the two recovery program teachers is the fill-in questions in some of the courses. Dr. Richter said, “When you see students’ words, you get a sense for whether they really know the material. This product (FuelEd) is more academically rigorous than other digital options we reviewed.” One of the recovery program teachers concurs, saying that student answers to the fill-in questions help her individualize her discussions with students.

Junior High Academic Recovery program. In both 7th and 8th grade, junior high students must pass four specific core courses (math, English, science, and U.S. history). In the past, students who did not pass these core courses might be “socially promoted,” or they might be held back to repeat a grade. A third option was to give these students large paper packets of instructional materials and require them to pass tests covering this material. None of these three options worked well.

The new procedure is for Williams junior high school teachers to identify students who earned less than 60% in a core course. Recovery program teachers then enroll these students into a FuelEd online course comparable to the core course the student failed. Students must complete all the activities in the online course and earn 70% to pass the course, as opposed to the required 60% in the original course.

High School Credit Recovery program. High school students must complete not only an online course for the course they did not pass, they must also complete an elective online course. This strategy insures they stay on track with their credits for graduation.

There are three **similarities** between the junior high academic recovery program and the high school credit recovery program (see Table 1): both programs operate only on Saturday mornings in the school’s computer labs, students must take an entire online course in the online learning lab, and they must pass that course with a score of at least 70%.

There are also two key **differences** between the junior high academic recovery program and the high school credit recovery program. First, high school students who earn less than 60% in either an original core or **elective course** must complete the entire course again by passing a comparable online credit recovery course.

The second difference is that California certified FuelEd teachers facilitate and are the teachers of record for all online high school credit recovery courses whereas Williams teachers facilitate and are the teachers of record for all junior high academic recovery courses. Williams recovery program teachers work with both high school and junior high school students in the Saturday computer labs.

Table 1: Comparison of Academic and Credit Recovery Programs

Program Attribute	Junior High Academic Recovery Program	High School Credit Recovery Program
Criteria for enrollment into the Academic Recovery or Credit Recovery Programs	Student earned less than 60% in a core, face-to-face course	Student earned less than 60% in a core or elective face-to-face course
Type of online course students take in recovery program	Full online course	Full credit recovery course Full online elective course
Required passing rate for online courses and online credit recovery courses	70% passing grade for core courses	70% passing grade for both core and elective courses
Instructional setting and methodology	Saturday morning in-school online learning labs. Tutored by Williams teachers and student mentors in the labs.	Saturday morning in-school online learning labs. Tutored by Williams teachers and student mentors in the labs.
Instructors who teach the online courses	Williams recovery program teachers	California certified FuelEd teachers

Critical elements in Williams’ intervention programs. Reflecting on the three years since the inception of the junior and senior high programs, Dr. Richter makes three observations about the success of these interventions:

- Struggling students need to experience a little success and once that happens, they typically embrace their responsibility to improve.
- To have that initial success, students need to work individually with a dedicated teacher who can personalize the instruction to address a student’s prior experiences, current situation, and future goals.
- Instruction must be engaging and exciting. The high quality FuelEd online courses and dedicated Williams teachers and mentors, create the right combination for success.

In commenting about the success of the two programs, Dr. Richter noted that, “Students like the programs and their newfound success. They like the control they have over their learning with the self-paced online courses and the progress information the FuelEd learning platform provides. Most importantly, in June 2015, no Williams high school students were credit deficient and all but one junior high student were promoted to high school.”

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Two innovative programs keep at-risk students on track—one designed to ensure junior high students progress on schedule and are ready for high school, and the other to ensure high school students are earning needed credits for on-time graduation.

All instruction is based on a **comprehensive online course curriculum**, provided by FuelEd, delivered in an in-school lab setting. Students can also access online courses from home.

Two full-time Williams teachers work with students in the labs, and are also available online to assist students at other times. **Two Williams high school senior students** are assigned to the learning labs to mentor students.

Junior high students earning less than 60% in a traditional course are enrolled in the **academic recovery program** for the following semester and take an online course comparable to the original course they failed.

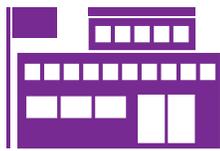
High school students earning less than 60% in a traditional semester course are enrolled in the **credit recovery program** for the following semester and must take two online courses: one to recover lost credit, plus a new elective course.

Online Instruction plus On-Campus Tutoring Produces Remarkable Results

The goal of the junior high academic recovery and the high school credit recovery programs was to keep students on track, in school, and on target to graduate. Results have been impressive and show that Dr. Richter and his recovery program teachers achieved their goal.

Success From Eighth Grade through High School Graduation

EIGHTH GRADERS PROMOTED TO HIGH SCHOOL



80
of
84

promoted in 2014–15 school year

82
of
83

promoted in 2015–16 school year

REDUCTION OF CREDIT DEFICIENT HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

August 2013:

120

students were credit deficient



August 2014:

14

students were credit deficient



June 2015:

0

students were credit deficient

SUMMER SCHOOL PARTICIPATION

In 2013, 2014 and 2015
Over 100 students took at least one online FuelEd course each summer



100+

GRADUATION RATES & COLLEGE ENROLLMENT

All 96 students who entered Williams Junior Senior High School as freshmen, in the fall of 2011, graduated in May 2015.



Since 2013, the number of students on track to meet University of California enrollment criteria **increased 75%**



BOTTOM LINE:

At-risk Williams Junior Senior High School students take responsibility for their learning due to the success they enjoy and experience in the academic and credit recovery programs

Wright City Academy

Wright City, Missouri

High school alternative education and credit recovery programs, coupled with quality online courses and great teachers, convince struggling students they can succeed

Wright City Academy provides online alternative education and credit recovery programs for at-risk high school students attending Wright City High School. The high school, which serves 419 students in grades 9 through 12, is located in a rural setting near St. Louis, Missouri, and is part of the Wright City R-11 school district, which has an enrollment of 1,520 students. In its 2015 listing of Best High Schools, U.S. News & World Report awarded Wright City High School a Bronze Award.

The Academy opened in the fall of 2005 and began using the Fuel Education (FuelEd) online curriculum in 2013. Alternative education students transfer into the Academy when they need extra assistance. When they are back on track, they return to the regular high school. In addition to the alternative education program, students can participate in a credit recovery program, offered after school during the school year and during summer school.

Two dedicated Academy instructors work with students in two computer labs, one for freshmen and sophomores, and the other for juniors and seniors. One of the Academy instructors notes, "The Academy is not like regular school where they have to stay in class throughout the entire school year. We can be more flexible with these students than they can be at the high school. We take a more personalized approach."

FuelEd provides the original credit courses, the credit recovery courses, and the teachers, certified in the state of Missouri, for those credit recovery courses. Two Wright City Academy High School teachers facilitate the original credit courses. They also work individually with students taking both types of FuelEd courses to tutor, mentor, and support them in the learning labs.

From January 2014 through August 2015, 86% of Academy students successfully completed their courses and 83% of the regular high school students who had failed a course completed their credit recovery course.

An Alternative Setting Helps Struggling High School Students Accelerate Learning

In 2013, Wright Academy began using FuelEd original credit courses and credit recovery courses. Before that, the Academy used other online course providers. The switch to FuelEd has been a positive change. Carla Woods, one of the Academy instructors,

86%
of Wright City Academy students successfully passed their courses (Spring 2014 – Summer 2015)

SCHOOL

Type of school:
Public school

Grades:
9 through 12

Program opened:
Fall 2013

School enrollment: (Fall 2015)
419 High school
28 Academy program
44 Credit recovery program
78 Summer school credit recovery program

Ethnicity:
86.7% White
6.5% Black
3.5% Multiracial
3.3% Hispanic

Free / reduced-price lunch:
49.9%

Program staff:
2 Full-time teachers
.33 time Administrator
.33 time Counselor

PROGRAM

Students served:
Programs within the school for selected students

Instructional model:
Online learning labs in the school

Course type:
Original credit courses and credit recovery courses

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Wright City Academy provides a full day, online alternative high school program for students who seek a different path or are unsuccessful in the regular high school

The Academy includes an online credit recovery program offered during the school year and during summer school

Students take online courses in computer labs managed by Wright City High School teachers, who provide one-to-one tutoring and assistance to each student

Students in the alternative education and credit recovery programs may take either FuelEd original credit courses or FuelEd credit recovery courses, based on need determined by a teacher

Wright City High School teachers are the online instructors for all FuelEd original credit courses, and Missouri-certified teachers from FuelEd teach the credit recovery courses

explains, “FuelEd is much more rigorous and much more technology based with videos and links to outside sources. FuelEd is set up like a class with labs in science, and interactive games to reinforce concepts, and videos to make the point.”

Academy Alternative Education Program. Students move out of the regular high school and into the Academy when they need extra assistance. They move back into the regular high school only when they feel ready. Ms. Woods and the high school counselors meet weekly to discuss individual student progress. One of the Academy students says, “I entered the Academy as a sophomore. Now I am a junior. I decided to stay so I can focus on my work and be more independent.”

Most Academy alternative education students take FuelEd original credit courses, while a few take FuelEd credit recovery courses. Juniors and seniors study online in a computer lab at Wright City High School from 7:17 a.m. to 2:28 p.m. five days per week. The Academy freshmen and sophomores study online in a computer lab at Wright City Middle School from 7:10 a.m. to 2:15 p.m. five days per week.

The two Academy teachers manage the two computer labs and personalize the instruction to each student’s prior experiences, current situation, and future goals. “My job is to help them as best I can in whatever way I can,” says Ms. Woods. “We learn students’ strengths and weaknesses much faster here partly because we have more data and partly because we can spend more time with fewer students.” The FuelEd system provides detailed data to help the teachers get to know their students well.

There are typically 10 to 12 students at work in each of the two computer labs. Students in the Academy can also work from home, where they learn to be independent learners. “This year (2015–2016),” says Carla Woods, “two students, who had very poor attendance in the regular high school, transferred into the Academy and worked very well from home. They both made excellent progress.”

Credit Recovery Program. The Academy provides students flexibility in recovering credits. During the regular school year, students who attend traditional classes most of the day can go to a computer lab to work on their credit recovery assignments at the end of the day. These students may be in the computer lab for up to three class periods, depending on how many credits they want to recover.

Students can also recover credits during a 24-day summer school program, which has two sessions per day, morning and afternoon, offered in the high school computer labs. Students can attend either a morning or an afternoon session, or both if they are taking multiple courses.

Most students in the credit recovery programs take FuelEd credit recovery courses, while some credit recovery students take FuelEd original credit courses. An Academy teacher decides which type of online course best fits each individual student. One student notes, “The best part of these online courses is you can work at your own pace. I completed more in these courses than I have in any other class. I actually learned a lot. In some regular classes, I would just get the bare minimum done to pass.”

One of the Academy teachers explains that the FuelEd courses are very helpful for these at-risk students: “When students apply themselves, they see the progress. These FuelEd online courses really make students work and are a lifeline for many of these kids.”

Online Alternative Education and Credit Recovery Programs Are a Lifeline for Struggling Students

FuelEd original credit and credit recovery courses are critical to the success of Wright City Academy's alternative education and credit recovery programs. Together, these programs meet a wide range of intervention and improvement needs. Wright City Academy is turning frustrated and unsuccessful students into motivated learners, who take pride in their work and aspire to earn their high school diploma.

Outstanding course completion and graduation rates point to success (from spring 2014 through summer 2015)

COURSES COMPLETED BY ACADEMY STUDENTS

86%

(57 of 66) successfully completed their Academy courses



SCHOOL YEAR CREDIT RECOVERY COURSES COMPLETED

81%

(76 of 94) of regular high school students taking credit recovery courses during after-school sessions in the school year successfully completed their work



SUMMER SCHOOL CREDIT RECOVERY COURSES COMPLETED

85%

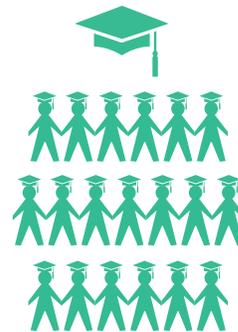
(117 of 138) of regular high school students taking credit recovery courses during summer school successfully completed their work



ACADEMY GRADUATES

19

Academy students graduated



BOTTOM LINE:

Wright City Academy's FuelEd-powered alternative education and credit recovery programs are helping struggling students become independent and successful learners.