



Setting an Early Pace for High School Success in Paxton, IL

Paxton-Buckley-Loda Senior High School



Travis Duley,
Principal



470 students
Grades 9 to 12



Courseware



93% Caucasian
6% Hispanic
38% economically
disadvantaged
13% special education

The Challenge:

Credit recovery is a critical part of the high school mission, giving students an opportunity to stay on track to graduation when they would otherwise be unable to earn enough credits. Often, credit recovery is focused toward those students with the most acute need for the services: seniors and juniors.

Some schools have expanded credit recovery to offer it earlier to keep students on track from the beginning of high school; however, small schools often lack the resources to offer such a widespread program.

“In our previous credit recovery strategy, the students were paying for the courses themselves, at \$160 per credit, because we simply did not have the means ourselves,” shared Paxton-Buckley-Loda (PBL) Senior High School Principal Travis Duley.

PBL High School, in a rural district in Illinois, is the product of decades of district consolidation due to enrollment, and it serves nearly 500 students from five different counties.

The district initially investigated Edmentum Courseware as an alternative education program, but soon saw that blended learning could help all students who fall behind.

Credit recovery often focuses on students who are close to graduation. However, keeping students on track throughout their high school careers has benefits that go beyond a four-year graduation rate. In fact, for Paxton-Buckley-Loda Senior High School in rural Illinois, the ability to offer a cost-effective credit recovery solution is having transformative effects throughout the school.

How They Did It:

A student's path to graduation begins as soon as a freshman steps through the door. In a reflection of its importance as an indicator of future success, the state of Illinois tracks the rate of freshmen who are on track for graduation on every school's state report card.

Rather than waiting until senior year to recover needed credits, PBL High School has been helping underclassmen catch up with their peers through Courseware's blended learning solution, which has yielded benefits that extend beyond statistics.

For example, class sizes in the core classes stay at manageable levels when students no longer have to retake courses in person. Personnel and other resources can be redirected to other areas of the school, and first-time students benefit from more attention from the teacher—lowering the chances of students needing to recover credits in the first place.

More flexibility and a wider selection of available courses also help engage students by reflecting their interests beyond school and giving them more paths to success.

“Edmentum’s course flexibility and selection helps students succeed that normally would struggle,” Mr. Duley said. “If a student needs a science credit to graduate, and they have been struggling in biology, that credit doesn’t necessarily have to be in biology anymore.”

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Success:

The correlation between freshman success and eventual graduation is particularly strong at PBL High School. If that continues, the school has a lot to look forward to in the coming years.

“Our freshman on-track rate from the state increased 11 percent in the first year of our using Edmentum Courseware for credit recovery,” reported Mr. Duley.

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The Future:

Paxton-Buckley-Loda Senior High School is trying to strategize how to best provide its students with more time to work with Courseware, seeing a jump in success from students who were able to work with the program on a dedicated basis over the summer rather than the one period per day that students currently have during the school year. The school is also going to be using Courseware for the original purpose—bolstering its alternative education offerings.

For more information:

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