



Improving Outcomes through Intervention, Test Prep, and Individualized Learning in Onalaska, Texas

Onalaska Independent School District, Onalaska, Texas



Jessica Caso, Onalaska
JSHS School Counselor
Robyn Thornton,
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1,110 students
Grades K to 12



Courseware
EdOptions Academy
Exact Path
Study Island



71.4% economically
disadvantaged
11.4% special education
0.8% English language
learners

The Challenge:



ONALASKA WILDCATS

Onalaska Independent School District serves the small city of Onalaska, Texas, which is located about 80 miles north of Houston on a peninsula of Lake Livingston. Educators in Onalaska ISD are always looking for innovative

ways to meet the needs of their students. In 2016, the partnership between Onalaska ISD and Edmentum began when the district was looking for a new online curriculum provider to support credit recovery and provide additional course options. Helping to lead the implementation are Robyn Thornton, former curriculum director and now principal of Onalaska Junior Senior High School (JSHS), and Jessica Caso, school counselor at Onalaska JSHS.

Onalaska Independent School District began partnering with Edmentum in 2016 when it needed an online course provider for credit recovery and for expansion of its course catalog. Since then, the partnership has expanded to support intervention, state test (STAAR) preparation, foundational literacy, CTE, and personalized learning initiatives in grades K-12. Onalaska ISD has already begun to see results with phenomenal improvements on STAAR end-of-course assessments between 2018 and 2019.

How They Did It:

Onalaska Junior Senior High School (JSHS)

At Onalaska JSHS, educators work to make sure that all students are prepared for each of their state tests (STAAR end-of-course), are able to receive targeted intervention when they are struggling, and have access to all of the courses they need to graduate college and career ready.

EOC Preparation

To prepare students for the STAAR assessments, Onalaska ISD utilizes Study Island, Edmentum's formative assessment and practice program.

"The teachers who had tested areas on the STAAR test went through and created [assignments] that the students could complete outside of school or during their homeroom period," explained Mrs. Thornton. "They jump-started that program by having a parent night where they introduced the parents to Study Island, showed them how to log in with their students, what their students should be working on, and how to check to see how far along the students were progressing. Then, they had the students complete those [assignments] for extra points in their regular class."

The assignments that teachers created targeted the standards that students had the most trouble with, and parents were especially pleased with how Study Island made it easy for them to support their students' learning.

"And, our parents, they want to help," said Mrs. Caso. "Sometimes, they just don't know how. So, having Study Island there to help guide them, and they could open up the report and say, 'OK, my child made 5 out of 10, so that's 50-percent proficient on this, so we need to work on the rest of the 50 percent that they're lacking on.' It was easy for them to see what their kids are doing and understand it."

When Study Island was first implemented at Onalaska JSHS, it didn't catch on right away, but after the 2018 Christmas break, the administrative team made the decision to go all in and put together a plan to use the program with fidelity.

"And, it just took off from there," explained Mrs. Caso. "And, we just saw leaps and bounds of growth for our kids. . . . [Study Island] is our baby. That is our pride and joy right now."

Targeted Intervention

Educators at Onalaska JSHS know that students won't be successful if they don't receive the help they need to address learning gaps. So, Onalaska JSHS has implemented a program to make sure that 7th, 8th, and 9th grade students who need the most support receive targeted intervention every day. Students who are not proficient in reading or math based on prior STAAR results, class grades, or another measure have an RTI class period built into their schedules. During that class period, students work on Exact Path, Edmentum's K-12 adaptive assessment and personalized instruction program.

"The teachers in the RTI lab set [the students] up on Exact Path," said Mrs. Thornton. "We did a diagnostic four times a year, I believe it was, and they worked on it daily while the teacher was doing small-group instruction."

The RTI program was extremely successful in helping students achieve growth.

"On average, our students grew by two grade levels using Exact Path in [the RTI teacher's] classroom," said Mrs. Thornton. "[Exact Path] was a huge piece in our success this year."

More Course Options

Educators in Onalaska ISD don't let the district's small size limit its students' course options. To make sure that students can take the courses they need and want despite hectic schedules and staffing challenges, the district utilizes Courseware, Edmentum's online curriculum, and EdOptions Academy, Edmentum's fully accredited virtual school, which combines Courseware with state-certified teachers. The type of course and availability of an on-campus teacher to facilitate the course determines which program is implemented to meet the need.

- Students who need courses that aren't offered by the district or who need a course for which an on-campus teacher isn't available, take the course through EdOptions Academy.
- If there is a certified teacher to facilitate the course but there aren't enough students taking it to warrant a full class period, or if a student has a scheduling conflict with the time the course is offered, the student takes the course through Courseware with the Onalaska ISD teacher serving as the teacher of record.
- All Onalaska students take Spanish 1 and 2 through Edmentum Courseware with an on-campus facilitator.
- Edmentum Courseware is also used as the curriculum for many of the CTE courses offered on campus, including digital media, commercial photography, and graphic design. Teachers utilize the tutorials, mastery tests, and unit assessments in the Edmentum courses, alongside the teachers' hands-on instruction.

Onalaska Elementary School

At Onalaska Elementary School, students use Reading Eggs, Edmentum's learn-to-read program, as well as Study Island and Exact Path, to help improve foundational literacy skills, engage in individualized learning, and prepare for the STAAR assessments.

Onalaska Elementary students go to the computer lab once a week to use Exact Path. While at Onalaska JSHS, only students in need of intervention use Exact Path, at Onalaska Elementary, all students use the program.

"They didn't target RTI students or lower-level students or students who were off grade level," said Mrs. Thornton. "They had all students [using Exact Path], and as a parent, I would tell you that I love that idea as well because [my son] was above grade level. He was getting above-grade-level instruction by using Exact Path, where maybe in the classroom, he wasn't getting as

much differentiation in his reading or in his math. . . . I love the idea that some students were working above grade level while others were working below grade level trying to build their skills.”

When it comes to Study Island, the implementation is similar to that of Onalaska JSHS, with teachers using the program in their classrooms and creating assignments to target specific standards. Students often use Study Island during their station rotations while the teacher is working with a small group or with students one on one.



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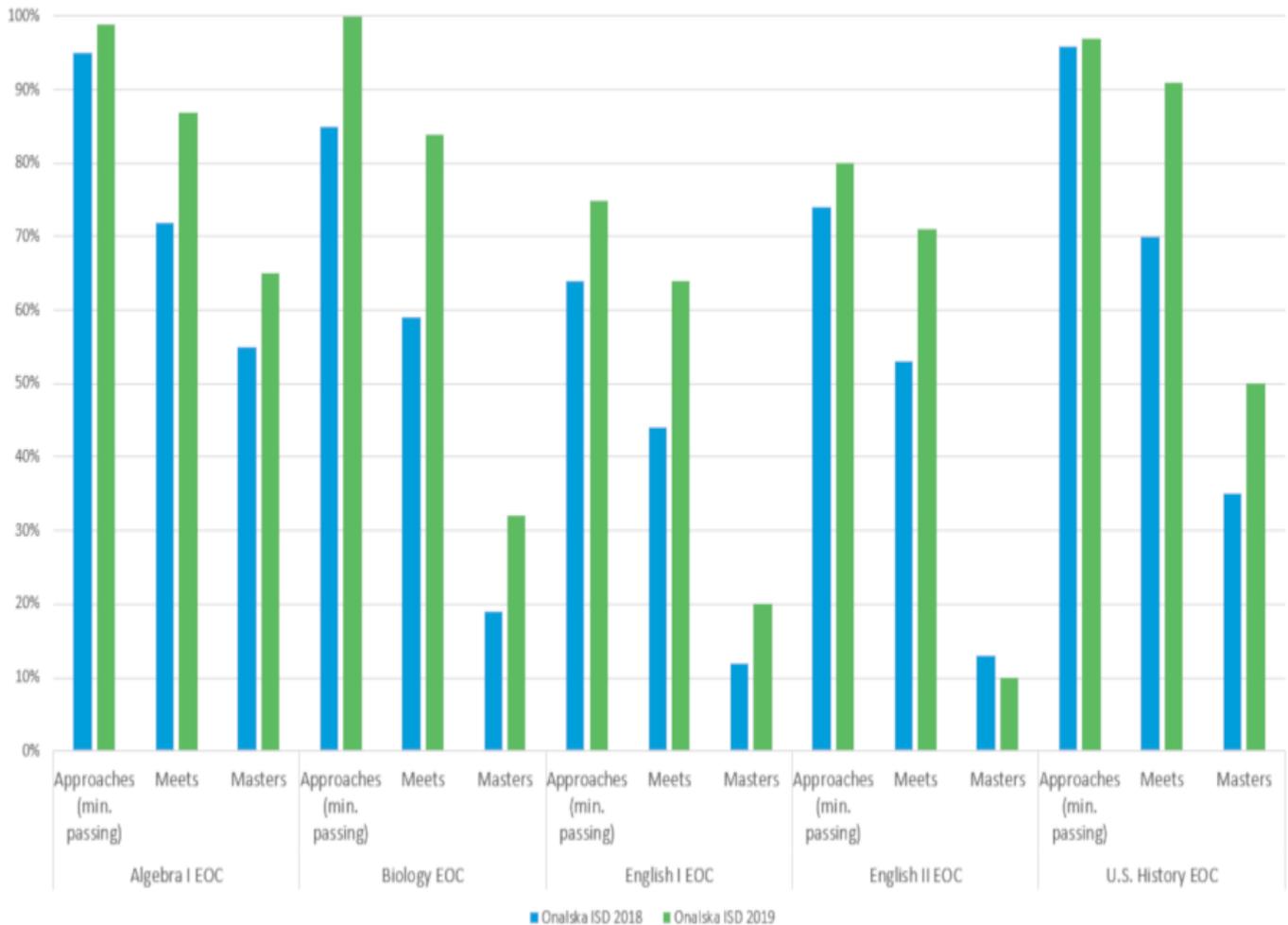
Jessica Caso
Onalaska JSHS School Counselor

Success:

Educators at Onalaska ISD experience the fruits of their labor every day through student engagement and improved achievement. The district received results of the first round of STAAR end-of-course assessments, and they are outstanding, with large improvements across all high school subjects from 2018 to 2019. And, with summer retesting not yet complete, the 2019 scores will likely go up even higher.

“I get so excited about this part because our kids really just did a great job, our teachers did a great job, and we're just very proud of them,” said Mrs. Caso.

Onalaska ISD STAAR EOC Results: 2018 compared to 2019



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Robyn Thornton
Onalaska JSHS Principal

The Future:

Because of the success the district has experienced, Onalaska ISD plans to continue using Edmentum programs, tweaking their implementation along the way to improve outcomes for its students.

“I think the unique thing about Edmentum . . . is it meets all students,” said Mrs. Thornton. “I mean, whether they’re above grade level [or] below grade level, it meets them where they are. And so, there’s something for everybody within Edmentum.”

For more information:

Contact [800.447.5286](tel:800.447.5286) or visit www.edmentum.com (/) to learn more about Edmentum's online learning solutions.