



Preparing Middle School Students for Ninth Grade Success

Dixon Public Schools, IL

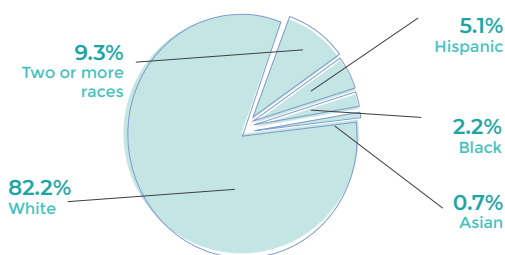


Apex Learning Solutions

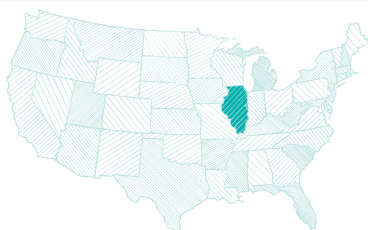
- ✓ **Courses**
- ✓ **Blended Learning**
- ✓ **Virtual Learning**

District Profile

- Rural**
- 5 Schools**
- 604 Middle School Students**
- 2,771 Students**



- ✓ **49.7% Low income**
- ✓ **50% Free and reduced lunch**
- ✓ **11.8% Percent IEP**



Challenge

Illinois has a strict policy for students advancing from middle school to high school: students must pass all subjects before moving to the ninth grade. Reagan Middle School educators sought to improve support for at-risk students who didn't come to class regularly, were coping with mental and physical health issues, or had life situations that affected their learning.

Solution

Dixon Public Schools uses Apex Learning to provide remediation and credit recovery to at-risk student groups, with the goal of filling in knowledge gaps and getting students back on track by the end of the school year. Their summer school program gives students another option to complete requirements for grade-level advancement.

Results

More students who were at risk of repeating eighth grade have advanced and are prepared for ninth grade coursework. Students are more engaged, and as a result are more motivated to complete course requirements.

Dixon Public Schools has been using Apex Learning for more than seven years in the high school's alternative learning program and for summer programs. Based on the success of those programs and evaluation by Reagan Middle School educators, the district expanded use to serve the unique learning needs of middle school students, particularly at-risk students who need additional support.

"Apex fit in to our curriculum and ensured that students were exposed to different academic skills."

Preparing Students to Meet Ninth Grade Expectations

Reagan Middle School takes a proactive approach to ensuring that students are ready for the next grade. Principal Andy Bullock said, "We start with the ideal ending point: that students are caught up at the end of the school year." The school uses Apex Learning to provide remediation, with the goal of filling in knowledge gaps and getting students back on track to ninth grade readiness by the end of the school year. Educators expose students to ninth grade course expectations, including the kinds of classes they'll be required to take and the styles of instruction in each class. It's critical for students to learn how to navigate an online learning environment and gain exposure to digital curriculum, as they will likely encounter that in high school and beyond.

Andy Bullock, Principal
Reagan Middle School

Students have more options for learning at their own pace and in settings conducive to their own needs, whether that's in a school computer lab or at home. Summer school gives students another way to complete requirements. Principal Bullock notes that 59 of the 60 students in summer school over the past two years have completed requirements for grade promotion.

Communication Between Middle and High School Educators is Key

Dixon Public Schools has done extensive curriculum work over the past few years to ensure that they are teaching the most important concepts from grade level to grade level. Reagan Middle School works closely with Dixon High School to understand which skills students will need for high school success and what to focus on in middle school. Educators discuss what curriculum they will deliver each year and how they will assess progress. Through these discussions, they ensure that there is common language and terminology. Reagan Middle School evaluates and adjusts curriculum and assessment regularly to help ease the transition to high school.

Teachers appreciate that the activities and rigor of Apex Learning digital curriculum are appropriate for their students' needs. They have noticed that students are more engaged and have intrinsic motivation to succeed. Principal Bullock said, "Once we have students get involved in courses and engaged with activities, they are successful in completing requirements."

Learn more about Apex Learning digital curriculum solutions:

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