



CASE STUDY

# Switch to Apex Learning More than Doubles Graduating Class

## North Little Rock Academy, Arkansas

### Challenge

North Little Rock Academy is the third-largest alternative education school in Arkansas. It serves over 150 students who have life challenges often related to home life or disciplinary problems. According to Principal Charles Jones, attendance is one of the biggest challenges the school addresses. When students are absent, they don't learn and they lose credits.

### Goal

The Academy sought a digital curriculum that would enable them to move toward a personalized learning environment and meet the needs of these at-risk students. The rest of the district already used another digital curriculum provider but it didn't provide a solution that addressed the specific needs of the Academy.

### Solution

The Academy implemented Apex Learning Comprehensive Courses in a personalized learning environment that provides broad support for all the programs it offers: a general program for credit recovery, as well as additional programs for summer, after school, and long-term suspension. Additionally, Tutorials are used to enhance whole-class instruction.

### Results

The number of graduating students at North Little Rock Academy for the 2015 - 2016 school year increased 140% over the previous year, with 100% of seniors graduating. In addition, five of the graduates who started the school year as juniors were able to accelerate their studies and graduate early. Students are more motivated and now have hope for a better future. The Academy makes college a reality for students who otherwise might never have finished high school.

### Number of Graduates



2015 - 2016 School Year

### School Profile

- 154 Students
- Grades 6 - 12
- Free and Reduced Meals: 91%
- ELL: 4%
- Small City District

### Demographics

- Black/African American: 89%
- White: 6.5%
- Hispanic/Latino: 4.5%

### Products and Implementation

- Comprehensive Courses
- Tutorials
- Blended Learning
- Virtual Learning

### Success by the Numbers

- 100% of seniors graduated
- Graduation rate up 18% district-wide



## The Search for a Better Digital Curriculum Solution

The Academy looked at several digital curriculum providers that would help them effectively address the challenges of their students, overcome its absentee problem, and enable credit recovery.

The provider previously used by the district was too restrictive for their needs: students could only use it on campus and didn't receive any feedback until they completed a course. Without real-time data, teachers couldn't determine if students were mastering material until the end of a semester — when it was too late to remediate. In comparison, Apex Learning adapts to the varied needs and learning styles of students, ensuring that they are actively engaged with and motivated by the instructional content. "Apex fit what we needed," says Principal Charles Jones.

**"Apex has given them hope and that gives them motivation."**

**Charles Jones**  
Principal

## Personalized Learning Motivates Students

"The kids love Apex because it's student-friendly and helps them move towards graduation at their own pace. The more advanced students don't have to wait for everyone else to catch up, and the other students can master a subject before moving on."

As a result, the attitude of the students has changed dramatically. They want to learn. Even the students in the long-term suspension program have asked to use Apex Learning. Students willingly attend summer school, and they're talking about graduating and going on to college.

"Apex has given them hope and that gives them motivation," says Jones.

## A Model Alternative Education Program

Jones reports that Apex Learning has made life easier for teachers at the Academy. Teachers can now tailor their classes to each student to help them reach mastery instead of taking a one-size-fits-all approach. Yet they can still make sure that state standards are being met. Moving toward a personalized learning environment means they are now "teaching to the student versus teaching to the content."

The state of Arkansas recognized North Little Rock Academy as a model alternative education program, in which "Every student graduates prepared for college, career, and community engagement." The students at the Academy now have higher GPAs and fewer have to take remediation courses. More students are in the after school and summer programs. They have choices, they are motivated, and they are able to learn at their own pace.

"When I spoke to the School Board, they talked about how the graduation rate has greatly improved since the district started using Apex Learning and how the pieces are beginning to connect. The board is really pleased," says Jones.

In fact, the entire district has now switched over to Apex Learning as its digital curriculum solution.

## Contact

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