



# Increased Rigor and High Expectations Lead to Student Success

Window Rock USD, AZ

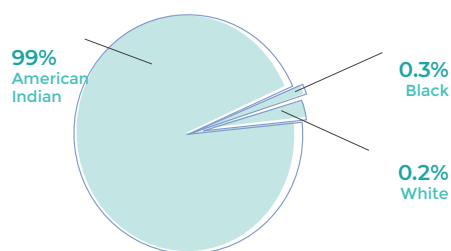


## Apex Learning Solutions

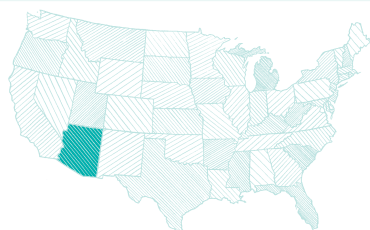
- ✓ Courses & Tutorials
- ✓ Blended Learning
- ✓ Virtual Learning

## District Profile

- Rural/Navajo Nation
- 6 Schools
- 600 High School Students
- 1,932 Students



- ✓ 76% Graduation Rate
- ✓ 97% Passing Rate for Courses
- ✓ 6% ELL Program



## Challenge

Window Rock Unified School District is a small, rural district in the Navajo Nation. In the early days of the district's digital learning program, there was little structure and a low level of rigor. Students skipped classes with the expectation that even if they failed, they could take an easy online course. Many students in the district also had challenging life situations that were obstacles to learning.

## Solution

Using Apex Learning, Window Rock High School administration is changing the culture and perception of digital curriculum in the district from a credit recovery-only solution to a critical tool for a variety of learning situations. Because Apex Learning digital curriculum offers both flexibility to customize to student needs and fidelity to standards, students now gain true mastery of content. In addition, students can take courses that would normally not be offered, such as college and career prep, music, and foreign language.

## Results

Students in the credit recovery program achieved a 97% passing rate for courses they took with Apex Learning, with an average course grade of 80%. The district now offers AP courses after several years without them, and some of the students who took AP courses online to be better prepared for college have gone on to the Ivy League and other prestigious schools.

## Getting Students and Families on Board

Many students are faced with challenges outside of school that can impact their motivation and engagement. Ensuring that students and parents understand the benefits of structured, rigorous digital curriculum goes a long way towards increasing motivation and achievement. Students may have low home support if their parents have little educational background or have had a bad experience with the education system. In some cases, students in the district live with grandparents who only speak the Navajo language or know little English and can't help with their schoolwork.

**“Standards alignment gives me confidence, knowing that students get what they need.”**

**Rebecca McClellan, Educator Window Rock High School Engagement**

## Bikáá' Hadiikah – Elevating to Excellence

Educators at Window Rock USD set high expectations for their students. Partnering with Apex Learning, Window Rock USD has been able to create an environment of high achievement in which students are challenged yet supported. Rebecca McClellan, who runs the credit recovery program using Apex Learning, emphasizes the importance of celebrating successes small and large to keep students motivated. She has a “data wall” in her classroom that shows student progress quarterly. Students get a certificate of completion when they complete and pass a course for credit toward graduation. When they complete all graduation requirements, their name is added to a section of the wall labeled “I’m Ready.”

When Ms. McClellan and the assistant principal of the high school, Arthur Ben, restructured the program, they made sure that accountability was a key component. Students and parents agree to a contract in which students must reach at least a 70% mastery level when they take Apex Learning Courses. Ms. McClellan emphasized that “students have to be accountable—build a picture of what that looks like.” If students are really struggling, they have an intervention contract with Ms. McClellan and Mr. Ben in which they receive tutoring three times per week until they reach content mastery of 75% or higher.

Ms. McClellan emphasizes to students that being prepared for their futures is not an option. They can achieve because of the supports and scaffolds in Apex Learning Courses, and there are always teachers who can coach and support them. The educators and administrators at Window Rock USD recognize that in order to elevate to excellence, students need to be challenged—the higher the expectations, the more students will meet the challenge. Principal Dan Horsley added, “Knowing that their teachers had high expectations for them opened up a whole new world for our students. Hold kids to a standard so that they’re ready for whatever comes next in their life.”

Ms. McClellan and Mr. Horsley offered these takeaways for implementing a successful digital learning program:

- Structure, accountability, and high expectations are key.
- When students are given more options for learning, they will take advantage of them.
- Expect more from your students—they will rise to the challenge.

**Learn more about Apex Learning digital curriculum solutions:**

**ApexLearning.com | (206) 381-5600 | info@apexlearning.com**

