

Plato Courseware Helps Students Recover Credits and Graduate on Time in Newark, OH

Newark High School



**Mike McNicol and
Marc Montella,
Teachers**



**1,482 students
Grades 9 to 12**



Courseware



**84.5% white, non-Hispanic
7.8% multiracial
5.1% African American
1.8% Hispanic
50.8% economically disadvantaged**

The Challenge:

Newark High School is located in the city of Newark, Ohio, about 30 miles east of Columbus. The school serves a community of over 6000 students. An estimated 16 percent of families in Newark live below the poverty line, while about 30 percent of children under the age of 18 are estimated to be living in poverty.

Plato Courseware has helped Newark High School's most at-risk students to thrive.

How They Did It:

As with many other schools serving at-risk populations, Newark High School seeks to give its students a head start in the world by making the dream of graduating a reality. The school aims to improve a sagging graduation rate through effective opportunities for credit recovery.

To achieve this goal in the past, Newark High School had established an alternative learning academy that served struggling students. When budget cuts forced the academy to close, the high school chose Plato Courseware as a way to continue serving its at-risk student population in the building.

"The graduation rate at Newark High School has hovered between 70 percent and 75 percent for several years prior to implementing Plato as a credit recovery option," said Mike McNicol, a teacher at Newark High School who assists students with Plato Courseware. "This was seen as a way to serve students who may be failing classes and not having much academic success."

At the end of the semester, a guidance counselor identifies students who are failing one or more classes in the core areas of math, English, science, and social studies. These students are typically placed in a Plato Courseware class in lieu of study hall. The class takes place in a computer lab that is dedicated to Plato Courseware and is run by two classroom teachers. The teachers help to ensure that students can recover the credits necessary to stay on track and, ultimately, graduate. The Plato Courseware computer lab also serves most of the Newark City School District fifth-year students, along with students who enroll in Newark High School mid-year and need help catching up.



Many of our students would not be able to graduate on time without Plato.



Marc Montella,
Teacher

Success:

Plato Courseware has allowed some of Newark High School's most at-risk students to thrive. "Our Plato program gives many students hope of graduation," said Marc Montella, the other Plato classroom teacher at Newark High School. In 2012–13, for example, students at Newark High School used Plato Courseware to earn 250 half credits.

McNicol pointed to one student in particular who earned 11 credits during one school year in order to graduate on time. "Some of his credits were earned in the regular classroom environment and through work-study, but if an online option would not have existed, he would never have graduated," said McNicol. Montella agreed, "Many of our students would not be able to graduate on time without Plato."

The Future:

For more information:

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