

From the EducationCity.com Files...



Case Study

Blue Ribbon Honoree Boosts Student Achievement with EducationCity.com

Summary

Woodview School utilizes EducationCity.com to provide standards-based, differentiated instruction, practice and assessment to all students in kindergarten through fourth grade. Since implementing EducationCity.com in 2008, the school has seen significant gains in the percentage of students meeting and exceeding Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) benchmarks.

Challenges

Incorporating technology while addressing individual learning abilities and styles

Woodview Principal Jeff Knapp characterizes his students as technology learners. For that reason the school realizes the need to incorporate new technology into the learning process across all grade levels. "Here at Woodview we build on technology from the base up," Knapp said. "The sooner we get our students comfortable with interactive whiteboards and computers, the more they will grow with the technology." The challenge is how to engage today's students with solid, academic content that not only captures their attention, but motivates and inspires learning.

Discovering EducationCity.com

Woodview School evaluated EducationCity.com's Language Arts module in late 2008. The evaluation was part of a concerted effort to seek out and implement a computer-based learning program. Third grade teacher, Jacquie Duginske, took the lead and today Woodview students enjoy EducationCity.com Language Arts and Math modules across all grade levels and have nearly 10,000 logins and 45,000 completed activities under their belt. Duginske has also been instrumental in aiding with the implementation of EducationCity.com in four other schools in Community Consolidated School District #46. Students in all grades typically complete EducationCity.com activities during computer lab time and incorporate the resource into additional learning conducted in the classroom.

Utilizing myCity to Differentiate Learning

Woodview uses the myCity feature to group students by achievement level based on ISAT scores. The myCity feature allows teachers to assign a group of customized activities to one or more students based on skill level. At Woodview, students are assigned to one of three groups: "Approaching," "On," and "Beyond" ensuring each student is working on activities that truly challenge their personal academic skills. EducationCity.com's progress monitoring tool, SuccessTracker then records every student response to generate individual and whole-class progress reports.

Snapshot

Woodview School, Grayslake, Illinois

School Statistics:

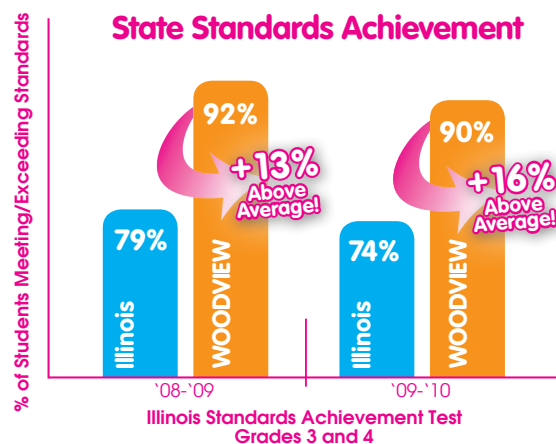
400 students Grades K-4
Suburban setting

Student population:

78% Caucasian 12% Hispanic
4% Asian/Pacific Islander 3% Multiracial
3% African-American

Results:

- Increased student engagement
- Increased student performance



"Everything is data-driven," Duginske said. "I am constantly evaluating the SuccessTracker data to monitor the direction my instruction should take." In fact, Duginske says she changes each student's learning path three to four times each year. "It's really exciting when a student moves from "Approaching" to "On" or from "On" to "Beyond," she says. And, in 2011, Woodview is using the myCity feature to prep specifically for state testing.

In addition, EducationCity.com Teacher Features give educators the ability to change preferences within the resource to better suit individual learning styles and foster confidence. For example, teachers have the option to disguise the actual grade level at which students are working. In the 2010-2011 school year Duginske has 24 students in her third grade class and she says



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their ability levels range from second grade all the way up to fifth grade. "Being able to hide the academic level each student is working at has been a huge benefit for us," she says.

Response to Intervention

Woodview School's Response to Intervention program categorizes each and every student as Tier 1, Tier 2 or Tier 3. The Tier 1 program includes EducationCity.com assessments within the classroom environment to reinforce concepts and pay special attention to students that may be on the brink of Tier 2 placement. Knapp believes EducationCity.com plays an important role in this Tier 1 intervention especially when it comes to communication with parents. "Parents want to know how their children are doing and what we can do to take them to the next level," Knapp said. "When we're able to tell them we are teaching to their child's individual abilities and challenging their knowledge, it's music to any parents' ears."

Introducing Technology and Building on It

Woodview Information Specialist Jill Tarnowski is charged with reinforcing what's taught in the classroom while at the same time teaching new technology skills. Woodview students spend at least 40 minutes each week in the computer lab with Tarnowski. Tarnowski says EducationCity.com falls into place in teaching in accordance with Illinois Standards Aligned Instruction for Libraries (ISAIL) objectives which specifically state the technology skills a student should master by the end of the school year. When the students file into the computer lab they are able to log in to EducationCity.com on their own, find their assigned myCity and start completing

activities that are meant just for them. "The students are 100% engaged when they are working on EducationCity.com," Tarnowski says.

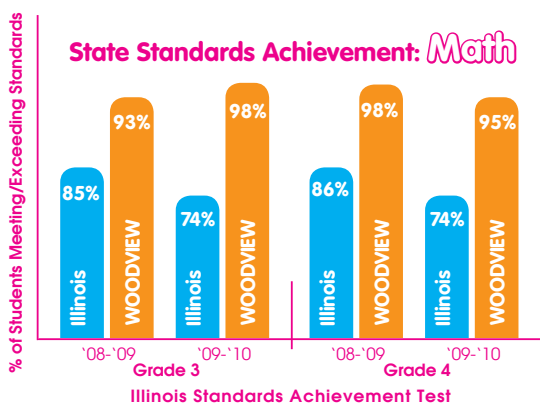
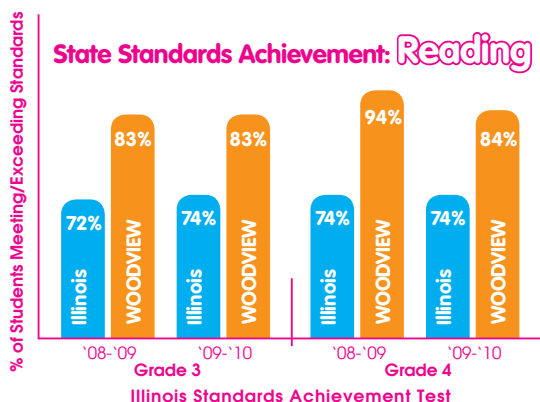
Technology does not play second fiddle to academics at Woodview. Knapp wants Woodview students to be prepared for the next steps in their academic careers, noting that Woodview students feed into one district building for fifth and sixth grade. "We use EducationCity.com on our interactive whiteboards to challenge the students academically, but also to familiarize them with technology" Knapp said. Knowing what's expected of them at a fifth and sixth grade level, Knapp said EducationCity.com is playing a big part in ensuring his students are prepared for the next level. Additionally, Knapp believes EducationCity.com has proven to be successful at Woodview in part due to the engaging content. "Anything on the computer that presents as a game is very easy to hook a child's attention," he said. When those games are aligned to state standards - it's even better.

Making Training a Priority

The secret to Woodview's success is all about making training a priority. Knapp suggests that new subscribers designate one faculty member to pioneer and become an expert on the resource with the intent and responsibility to conduct internal training sessions throughout the year. Duginske made it her job to learn the resource and teach her colleagues how to better utilize the program. Now, Duginske, in tandem with Tarnowski, heads up periodic staff training a few times each year.

"When Woodview started using EducationCity.com we were just exploring the resource," Knapp says. "Now, due to continuous training, the resource is better utilized by teachers and it has truly become a valuable differentiated learning tool. Jacquie has been a tremendous resource for the entire building when it comes to implementing EducationCity.com."

**"EducationCity.com is playing a big part in ensuring our students are prepared for the next level."
-Jeff Knapp, Principal**



Leading the Way

Woodview's focused technology initiatives and excellent test scores have not gone unnoticed. The school was named a 2007 Blue Ribbon Points of Light School and a 2009 Blue Ribbon Lighthouse School. The prestigious Blue Ribbon Schools Program honors public and private elementary, middle, and high schools that are either high performing or have improved student achievement to high levels, especially among economically disadvantaged students. The program is part of a larger Department of Education effort to identify and disseminate knowledge about best school leadership and teaching practices. In fact, Duginske presented EducationCity.com as part of her presentation on differentiating a language arts curriculum at the 2009 Blue Ribbon National Conference in Orlando, Florida and plans to do the same at the first Midwest Blue Ribbon Schools Conference, which will be hosted by Woodview School in April 2011.