



MathXL for School helps students develop skills through practice

Dobyns-Bennett High School in Kingsport, Tennessee was founded in 1918. It currently educates about 2,500 students in grades 9–12. The school’s mission is to improve student learning and focus on college readiness through effective collaboration and relationships. And in 2011, that focus led them to search for an innovative way to update their math curriculum to meet today’s needs.

Dr. Brian Tate, administrator and head of the math department, partnered with his teachers to find a digital platform with a high level of rigor that would help drive their self-driven curriculum, where no textbooks are used. After five years of searching, they did a demo of MathXL® for School and finally found the perfect fit for the department. “We were looking for something that would give kids instant help and feedback that wasn’t just multiple choice; it had to have some short answer and fill in the blank type questions. This [checks] every box that we were looking for.”



Pearson

Multiple uses across every ability level

Dr. Tate is impressed with the variety of ways MathXL for School helps the department adapt for students at every ability level. They utilize it for practice, homework, pre-testing, retesting, quizzes, remediation, and study plans.

“From remediation to honors to AP, we use it in every way you could think of using it. We put it to work.”

There are about 100 individual classes, from Algebra I all the way up through AP (and even a few state dual credit classes in Pre-Calculus and Statistics), that utilize MathXL for School with around 2,000 assignments administered every year. While teachers do take advantage of some pre-built assignments in MathXL for School, approximately 80% of assignments are created by teachers using resources available within the platform.

Though work within MathXL for School isn't required by this district for grades, teachers strongly encourage students to take advantage of the variety of resources available within the platform to address their strengths and weaknesses and develop their skills through practice. “[MathXL for School] tags along with our curriculum and is sitting there open any time a kid wants to go in.” **Feedback from students indicate they often take advantage of this opportunity, acknowledging the practice is instrumental in their success.**

Summer use for honors and remediation

The district also found a unique way to use MathXL for School for honor students taking Algebra and Geometry in 7th or 8th grade going into 9th grade Algebra II. In a three-day camp, students take a MathXL for School pretest and utilize a study plan over the duration of the summer to adequately prepare them with a fundamental understanding of the Algebra II concepts they are expected to know when they start high school.

In a similar way, they also use MathXL for School as a screening tool for transferring students into honor classes. And this past summer they just started using it for remediation as well. This means no student has to play catch-up at the beginning of the year.

Student performance

It can be difficult to know if a student isn't getting a concept right away, especially those who may be ashamed to admit in front of their classmates they are confused. Teachers review data within the platform to **identify struggling students**, allowing them to offer targeted intervention, ensuring they practice, increase proficiency, and in turn, confidence. If teachers notice a concept many students are struggling to grasp, they will address this in class to help reinforce concept proficiency.

According to Dr. Tate, students report their efforts spent in MathXL for School has led to increased performance on tests and content mastery. Conversely, teachers see that students who do not perform well are typically those students that do not make use of MathXL for School assignments.

“Students come back and say they see a difference in their grade. Plus, when teachers look at the data, they can tell the ones who have put the time in, the kids that have practiced are the kids that perform better on tests.”

The state of Tennessee is in the process of transitioning to allow students to skip remedial college classes if they score high enough on the ACT. As a result, Dobyns-Bennett High School wants to find a way to support students who struggle on the ACTs to help them increase their scores. To meet this need, the math department is looking forward to building a fourth-year class utilizing MathXL for School from scratch for the next school year.

Dr. Tate finds that as the years have passed since adoption, new challenges and goals have arisen, and MathXL for School has been the right tool to assist teachers in meeting every single one of them. “We just keep branching out and finding different uses for it. Therefore, our goals are constantly changing. It has really been able to support learning in everything we do.”



Conclusion

Teacher enthusiasm and support was a main reason Dr. Tate and the school chose MathXL for School, knowing it would help support student learning and achievement. "I don't know what didn't go well, to be honest. We wouldn't have paid for an eight-year extension if it wasn't going well. I just can't say enough. The many ways we have been able to adopt it; from the kids struggling, to the kids that need to be challenged. We have just been able to use it in so many ways."

[Learn more about MathXL for School »](#)