



Case Study:

Norwalk Public Schools

Norwalk, Connecticut

Overview

PROFILE

Norwalk Public Schools is a Pre K-12 public school located in Norwalk, Connecticut with a total student enrollment of 11,642.

CHALLENGE

The previous math curriculum at Norwalk Public Schools did not align to standards or allow for high-levels of student interaction. It was identified that students needed more opportunities for interaction due to remote instruction during the pandemic. Due to the high population of ELLs, it was critical for the district to create a more collaborative approach to the math curriculum. The district also needed summative and formative assessments to determine placement during transitioning grade levels.

SOLUTION

With Exemplars digital Library regularly updated with new and revised tasks, students had ample opportunities to break down learning barriers. It also gave teachers access to all the grade-level tasks for differentiated instruction, allowing them to pull from different grade levels for reinforcement and enrichment purposes.

Learn How Exemplars Closes The Opportunity Gap In Schools



Tina Henckel
Education Administrator
for School Improvement,
K-12 STEM



School Profile

- Population Density: Urban*
- Size: 11,642 Enrollment*
- Math Proficiency: 40%*
- Free & Reduced Lunch: 51.8%*

*Source: Niche.com

Read the full study



The Challenge

An administrator saw a lack of continuity with the previous math curriculum and its alignment with the Common Core Standards. There was a need for a more formalized horizontal and vertical articulation of the math curriculum within the district. It was also vital to have a tool to streamline the placement process for rising 6th grade students' math levels. After the students returned to in-person learning, the district needed a math curriculum that increased communication skills, collaboration, and creative problem-solving within small groups. It was reported that students did not have as many interactive opportunities during remote instruction.

Choosing Exemplars

With the high population of Spanish speaking (ESL) students and one dual language school within the district, Exemplars Spanish translated problem-solving performance tasks created an accessible curriculum. Exemplars tasks increased student engagement due to the relevant stories, autonomy, and multiple learning pathways. They also created opportunities for showcasing different approaches to solving problems creatively, enabling student-centered learning. The engagement images created context and built a visual model in students' minds which aided their understanding of the curriculum. Exemplars realigned tasks and explicitly created strategies to build conceptual components of tasks by grade-level.

The Outcome

As the district's administrator for school improvement, Henckel's primary focus was finding a curriculum aligned with the Common Core standards that carved out collaborative interactions to build math vocabulary and problem-solving skills. After using Exemplars in a previous teaching role and seeing its impact, Henckel was excited to learn that Exemplars was already available as a resource within the district. Her primary goal was to streamline identifying the tasks aligned to the grade-level standards within a unit in a formative and summative fashion. The district supplied professional development for teachers to understand how to use the tasks and rubrics to support student goal setting and expand their critical-thinking skills when solving problems. The formative tasks were teaching tools for collaborative learning; meanwhile, the summative tasks measured progress and growth. Exemplars provide high-quality, dual language math tasks to specific units of study to drive learning. In addition, it identifies and measures students' progress of the Math Practice standards, illuminating the schools' readiness for state testing.

“Exemplars is one of the strongest tools around math development. Students are approaching the tasks in a differentiated way because it is based on choice.”

Tina Henckel
Education Administrator for School Improvement
K-12 STEM