

Bear Creek Middle School Fairburn, GA

Goals

According to Estella Cook, Data Support Specialist at Bear Creek, the school had several goals in mind when it began a pilot implementation of Adaptive Curriculum in August 2009 and provided full access to the student body in January 2010.

“Our first goal was to improve math and science achievement on the Georgia CRCT,” says Estella, “and our second goal was to increase student engagement. Then, because our teacher experience levels and content expertise vary widely, a third goal was to support them with an additional tool and fill in any gaps in content knowledge. We also wanted to make the extended day program more enjoyable for students.”

The school’s science textbook included a virtual lab DVD, but there was no way to track student progress, according to Estella. Because the school had started a formative and summative assessment program, a final goal was to improve the tracking of student performance and levels of understanding.



Demographics:

- Small Community 25 Miles South of Atlanta
- Title I School
- 80% Black
- 11% Hispanic
- 4% White
- 5% Other

Building Academic Success

At the end of the 2009-10 school year, although students had worked with Adaptive Curriculum for less than six months, Bear Creek saw considerable improvements in math test scores across all grades and in 6th- and 7th-grade science. According to 7th-grade math teacher Rhonda Mays, “I’ve seen a remarkable improvement in the retention and understanding of concepts. I no longer have students who are completely lost or behind.”

Rhonda attributes this improvement to the program’s flexibility and depth. “I can assign activities as make-up work to students who were absent, additional activities to students not performing at a mastery level, and lessons from different grade levels to different students as needed.”

The school is pleased with the gains it’s made so far and plans to strengthen its Adaptive Curriculum implementation, especially in the area of Special Education. Estella Cook is working with the Special Education teachers to implement the personalization features more fully.

“Teachers in other content areas are envious—they want something like Adaptive Curriculum.”

-Estella Cook
Data Support Specialist

"This is now our focus," she says. "Since these students are easily overwhelmed, Adaptive Curriculum is showing them only a few activity objects, tailoring the program to their individual needs, and tracking their progress."

Engaging a Range of Students

Talented and gifted (TAG) students at Bear Creek have a tendency to breeze through problems without completing all the steps, according to Estella. "A group of 6th graders tried that with Adaptive Curriculum, and 'guess what' they got it wrong. So they had to go back and really figure out what was going on." TAG students complete most Adaptive Curriculum lessons outside of class, and many work on the program independently in the after-school program.

Estella reports that she was working with a teacher in the after-school program when a Special Education student asked for help with Adaptive Curriculum. The teacher asked him to wait a few minutes, but he soon completed the activity on his own and was thrilled with his accomplishment. "I saw that he was engaged enough to keep trying and not give up," says Estella. "That is so powerful."

Rhonda Mays believes that what sets Adaptive Curriculum apart is its ability to completely engage students. "Now I don't have to walk around and make sure they are not wasting time," she says. "I walk around and actually answer their math questions."

In science, students are motivated to keep on playing and beat the game portion of the program, according to Estella. And in the after-school program, they are enjoying the change of pace from the regular school day.

"I saw a Special Ed student who was engaged enough to keep trying and not give up. That is so powerful."

*-Estella Cook
Data Support Specialist*

"I've seen a remarkable improvement in the retention and understanding of concepts."

*-Rhonda Mays
7th-Grade Math Teacher*

Involving Teachers

Estella has found the online teacher guides to be essential in helping teachers get up to speed. "They show how to use the program with the whole class, in the computer lab, and one-on-one, and they provide background content that helps teachers be more confident," she says.

During the summer of 2010, a group of teachers participated in an extensive planning session to build Activity Objects into current lesson plans. The principal then requested that all teachers use the new lesson plans to ensure consistent use. "Now that the activity objects are specified within the instructional units, teachers are saving a lot of time," says Estella. "And teachers in other content areas are envious—they want something like Adaptive Curriculum."

Next Steps

"We are meeting our goals," says Estella, "and we plan to continue integrating the activity objects into our curriculum. We are looking forward to the next batch of activity objects and beginning to communicate with parents about the program."

Bear Creek shared its successes using Adaptive Curriculum with the local high school, which then wrote Adaptive Curriculum into its school improvement plan for implementation in the fall of 2010. "This will provide continuity for the students," says Estella, "and it will help the high school teaching staff, since students will arrive already familiar with the program. We expect this to be a win-win situation for students and teachers alike."

For more information on Adaptive Curriculum:

Call us at **1-888-999-9319**

E-mail us at **sales@adaptivecurriculum.com**

Visit us at **www.adaptivecurriculum.com**