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Case Study

Hartford Public Schools, CT

Creating the best learning environment possible for high school students

With 22,000 students, Hartford Public Schools is the largest district in the State of Connecticut. It's a district with a high poverty level, and like school districts across the country, Hartford has struggled with how to actively engage high school students, meet their needs, teach them to love learning, and prepare them for the future.

In 2013, Hartford Public Schools (HPS) received a grant for student-centered learning.

The Challenge

Engaging and exciting high school students is a difficult task, as well as adequately preparing them for college and life after school. This is true everywhere, and it's certainly true in Hartford, home of high poverty students, dealing with much more issues in life than they should at their age. This creates an opportunity gap where traditional teaching and learning models alone can not solve these issues.

How We Helped

In 2016, Education Elements worked with Hartford Public Schools (HPS) to support student-centered learning by implementing blended learning with a select cohort of teachers at two high schools in the district: Journalism and Media Academy Magnet School (JMA) and Bulkeley High School (BHS). Five teachers from JMA and 20 teachers from BHS led the work and experienced great success in their classroom implementations. In 2017, both schools launched a new cohort of blended learning teachers and offered professional learning and support for blended learning to all teachers.

This work was done using the Education Elements Personalized Learning Implementation Framework to guide a systemic change across the district.

The Results

These are leading indicators of the positive impact that personalized learning is having at HPS. Survey results in 2016 show that teachers who are implementing a blended learning approach to student-centered learning see a positive impact:

70%

of teachers at Hartford JMA & Culinary Arts Academy target instruction to address specific student needs and learning goals

72%

of teachers at Hartford Bulkeley HS say that their students show more self-direction in class

78%

of teachers at Hartford Bulkeley HS say they feel very effective since starting student-centered learning

Additionally, 100% of teachers who implemented student-centered learning last year and 76% of teachers who are implementing for the first time this year are confident that student-centered learning will have or already has a positive impact on teaching and learning. 92% say that their students are also more engaged since starting student-centered learning.