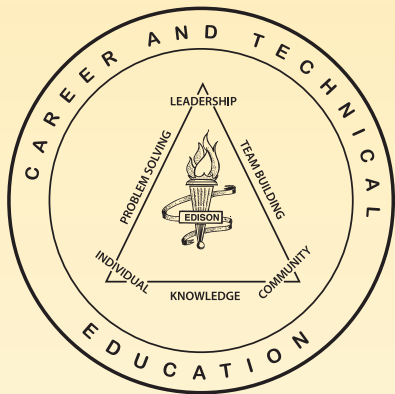




Microsoft Business Certification

Helps students turn chalkboard concepts into real-world job skills



Thomas A. Edison CTE High School

Location:
New York City, NY

Students:
600 of 10,000 applicants accepted yearly

Success Metrics:
Implementing a Microsoft Business Certification program within a CTE program results in:

- *Higher graduation rates:* CTE students are four times less likely to drop out before graduating than New York's overall high school population.
- *Postsecondary enrollment:* 92% of Edison students pursue higher education.
- *Labor Market Opportunities:* Work-based learning experiences give students a leg up in after-school and summer employment opportunities.

New York Career and Technical Education (CTE) Uses Certification to Equip Students with Skills for 21st Century Careers



CHALLENGE

The single biggest dilemma facing many high schools in New York City is that too many students still leave high school without diplomas or the skills required for success in the workplace. Specific skills are essential in almost every field, and the need for greater relevance in course curricula is critical. CTE high schools work to impart real-world skills, but many also struggle with low graduation rates and marginal test scores.

SOLUTION

During the last several years, Thomas A. Edison CTE High School in New York has worked to redefine what it takes for students to be successful in the workforce. Edison's Sid Siegel taught a basic computing course for several years and determined that his students needed more relevant programs. Siegel worked to convince the school's administration that incorporating the Microsoft® Business Certification would allow students to receive a more applicable education and an increased opportunity to gain employment.

"Adding a certification component provides students with an opportunity to build up a portfolio of achievements that are so important in today's society," Siegel said. "There is not a career, a place of employment, a business or industry that does not

infuse Word, PowerPoint, Access or Excel into its daily routine. Today's students need to prepare for today's world, as well as the future. Only those students who receive this type of technological instruction will find it possible to gain any employment whatsoever. Others will be at a great disadvantage."

Since Siegel initiated Edison's program, the New York Department of Education (DOE) has adopted a similar learning philosophy. The state's DOE now requires that all CTE centers incorporate certification to maintain federally funded programs— programs where implementation is often road blocked due to a school's lack of funding.

"Students need to be taught in ways that are relevant to their academic and career interests. All coursework, with clearly defined standards and expectations, can help build the skills students will need for success after high school."

- Sid Siegel
Microsoft Certified Trainer
Thomas A. Edison
CTE High School

In addition, Siegel has incorporated supplementary school requirements into a two-year Microsoft-centric program, empowering students to earn an Advanced Regents Endorsed Diploma. This is the highest level of academic achievement a student can achieve at Edison indicating they have not only passed all of their required state exams, but also all required CTE two-year sequence certification exams. Many area top colleges also apply the Microsoft certification toward college credit, a significant financial savings for students.

"There must be this shift in how students learn, how this knowledge is taught and how skills are measured," said Edison's Principal Anthony Barbetta. "By learning to adapt our curriculum to meet academic and industry needs, we can now ensure that our students are prepared and walk out qualified."

Nicholas Shivbaran recently graduated from Edison after participating in the school's Microsoft Office track and plans to pursue a career in pharmacy. He feels the relevant skills and certification obtained helped him stay focused in school and prepared him for future success.

"When I first got into the class I didn't fully understand the significance of becoming certified in Microsoft Office," said Shivbaran. "Now I am not only leaving with a certification that will look good on my resumé, but I feel that when I am assigned a task, whether it is at school or in my job, I will have the ability to complete it."

RESULTS

This improved, hands-on approach to career and tech education is producing positive outcomes. After several years of school reform, champions like Edison are seeing progress in graduation (80-85%) attendance (93%) and dropout rates (13%) – the value of accountability through certification. CTE programs that find relevance in their programs have become more successful overall than other high school programs in graduating students who can immediately find employment in today's marketplace.

"By supporting our students in acquiring relevant knowledge and engaging in career related learning, our students are one step ahead of the game," said Barbetta. "Our students have found value and a sense of purpose in high school. Certification provides them with a keen sense of accomplishment."



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