



Miami-Dade County Public Schools

Location:

Miami-Dade County, Florida

Program Enrollment:

100 students per year

Success Metrics:

- Certification satisfies state requirements
- Validates QuickBooks skills
- Industry-recognized certification builds resumes



Success Story

District Overcomes Hurdles to Get QuickBooks Certified User Program Approved and Implemented in 20 High Schools

CHALLENGE

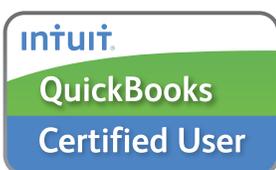
Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) is the fourth largest school district in the United States, serving Miami-Dade County, Florida. In 2007 the Florida Legislature passed the Career and Professional Education (CAPE) Act statewide, and a key component of the Act is promoting state-approved industry certifications that are critical to Florida's employers.

As a result, one of the goals of the M-DCPS Division of Career Technical Education is to increase the number of high school graduates that earn industry certification. A few years ago the Accounting Operations Program was battling limited enrollment numbers and did not offer a certification, so M-DCPS began to look for an exam to validate student skills.

"We have an industry board for our programs so we asked them which certification is the most appropriate for high school students studying accounting," said Robert Quinn, Educational Specialist for Business and IT Programs, M-DCPS. "QuickBooks was recommended and since most of our students will end up working for small or medium sized businesses and that is where the software is being widely adopted, we decided to move forward."

M-DCPS implemented the QuickBooks software in a few pilot high schools first and after initial success they added it to the Accounting Operations Program at 10 high schools, allowing students to learn the best-selling small business accounting software.

Since the Accounting Operations Program did not have an industry certification, next M-DCPS sought to adopt a QuickBooks exam to validate student skills.



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– Robert Quinn,
Educational Specialist for
Business and IT Programs,
M-DCPS

SOLUTION

M-DCPS heard about the Intuit QuickBooks Certified User (QBCU) credential from industry partners, and got in touch with Certiport to look into adopting the program. They were attracted to the exam because it could be implemented in the classroom.

“We chose Intuit QuickBooks for our Accounting Program because we needed something that was doable within the classroom setting,” said Sonia Samaroo, M-DCPS Educational Specialist for Business and IT Programs. “When Certiport showed us that QBCU could be administered within the classroom and our students didn’t have to travel to take an exam it was the perfect fit.”

The first step was to have the certification approved by the State Board of Education and added to the CAPE Industry Certification Funding List. The process took two years, but M-DCPS administrators succeeded.

“We knew our students were going to benefit, so we were determined to get the QuickBooks certification added to the list,” said Quinn. “We collected letters from many of our industry partners indicating how valuable this certification would be in the workforce, and ultimately we prevailed.”

Once QBCU was on the approved list, the district and schools that offer an Accounting Operations Program committed to learning and implementing the program. Teachers were certified, adopted the Certiprep preparation software, and added the exam to the end of the Accounting 3 course at no cost to students.

“Teaching the class and getting my students prepared for certification is easier than I expected,” said Daisy Benitez, a teacher at Mater Academy Charter High School. “By covering the book and practicing, our students become intuitive QuickBooks users, and then the certification comes naturally.”

RESULTS

Initially QBCU was implemented at 10 M-DCPS schools, but the program has grown significantly and is now offered at 20 schools. Prior to the QuickBooks implementation the Accounting Program was largely pencil and paper and enrollment was decreasing.

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Teachers are thrilled with the results, such as Cary Benevidas, a teacher at Miami Senior High School who worked as an accountant for 20 years. “Coming from industry, I know that QuickBooks certification is a key tool for a resume and college applications,” said Benevidas. “Potential employers have no idea how good the school or teacher was, but earning certification gives third party validation that our students have mastered this software and can use it on the job.”

Students are also seeing the immediate benefits of certification, including Teresita Diaz, whose QBCU certification helped her find summer employment.

“I was applying for a summer job and when the employer saw that I had QuickBooks certification they recognized that I knew the program and wouldn’t need training,” said Diaz. “They hired me over the other teenagers and certification definitely helped me get the job.”

ABOUT CERTIPOINT

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