



Microsoft® Office Specialist

Allows High School Students to Earn More Industry Credentials

Discover more 

Success Story



WHITTIER HIGH SCHOOL

Location:

Whittier, California

Total School Enrollment:

2,400 students

Program enrollment:

150 students

Success Metrics:

- Improved cost efficiencies
- Confidence to achieve college and career goals
- Valuable portfolio component



HIGH SCHOOL LEVERAGES MOS CERTIFICATION TO INCREASE VALUE OF CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

CHALLENGE

Whittier High School boasts a reputable Career and Technical Education program established through the California Partnership Academy. The Cardinal Computer Academy accepts students in their sophomore year and presents them with diverse curriculum to hone their business skills with an information technology pathway to graduation.

The Cardinal Computer Academy curriculum is broad. Sophomores acquire basic computing, keyboarding, ten key, word processing and presentation skills. Juniors learn to network with community mentors and develop their personal portfolios. Seniors seek local internships and complete a comprehensive capstone project as a final graduation requirement.

Although Kathleen Bailey had been a supporter of Microsoft® Office Specialist (MOS) exams since becoming the director of the Cardinal Computer Academy at Whittier High School four years ago, certification opportunities have been limited for students. Due to a lack of funding, students could only choose one industry certification to pursue.

"In the past, students could only complete one certification because of the cost," Bailey said. "Unless it included a promotional retake, the question became, 'Which Office application are you most confident you know thoroughly - because you only get one chance?'"

Recognized as the premier credential chosen by students seeking to validate their knowledge, skills and abilities relating to the Microsoft Office systems, Bailey wanted to increase her students' MOS exam pass rate and decrease the overall cost of certification.

SOLUTION

In order to grow and better leverage the MOS certification program, Bailey decided to implement a new offering from Certiport that includes a high volume of certification exams for a single annual fee—the Classroom License. With a license for high volume testing at Whittier High School, Bailey nearly cut the per student certification costs in half.

In addition to the Classroom License, Bailey purchased a license for Certiprep,™ Certiport's test preparation software for the Microsoft Office Specialist certification. Before sitting for a certification exam, students were encouraged to build proficiency using Certiprep. The Academy's certification pass rate jumped from 45 percent to 65 percent.

Using Certiprep also led to improved cost efficiencies and student achievement at Cardinal

Microsoft® Office Specialist

"All students can now achieve a level of proficiency by leaving our Academy with at least one certification. Their certification is in their portfolio, so when students apply for a job and go to an interview it is quickly displayed. The MOS certification shows a level of proficiency they have achieved."

– **Kathleen Bailey, director of the Cardinal Computer Academy at Whittier High School**

Computer Academy. "Since our investment in Certiprep almost guaranteed students would pass the certification test, we no longer needed to consider the cost of retaking the test," Bailey said. "And with the advent of the site license, the opportunity to certify was recently increased to include all Academy students."

RESULTS

With high volume exams and unlimited potential for success, 150 Cardinal Computer Academy students like senior Gian Pantaleon are taking advantage of the program before they graduate. Pantaleon, who came to the U.S. via the Philippines as a fifth grader, believes MOS certification will benefit him now and in his career and college aspirations. He's achieved the Microsoft Office Word certification and is working to earn both PowerPoint® and Excel® credentials.

"I think it will help me a lot," said Pantaleon. "It's a benchmark, and another skill I can hold on to. It will look good in my portfolio as well."

Senior Nathaniel Loomis believes his Microsoft Office Word certification will give him a leg up as he pursues a college degree. "Certification shows that I'm determined and have patience, which is needed for computer science," Loomis said.

Bailey said the certification program gives students a sense of confidence and empowers them for future success. "We are here to give them the confidence to move forward," she said. "Our students will be willing to learn and figure out the emerging technologies because they know they have successfully mastered the Microsoft Office Specialist certification."

Senior Jacob Iscaragua agrees. "Certification is not just to impress your future employer, but it is to better yourself."

With the Classroom License, Bailey is finally getting the best of both worlds— high volume exams to meet the needs of an expanding program and the flexibility to help students achieve their goals.

"All students can now achieve a level of proficiency by leaving our Academy with at least one certification," she said. "Their certification is in their portfolio, so when students apply for a job and go to an interview it is quickly displayed. The MOS certification shows a level of proficiency they have achieved."

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