

Embracing Blended Learning

Providing a world-class education to low-income minority students

IDEA PUBLIC SCHOOLS FAST FACTS

- Network of tuition-free K–12 public charter schools
- Rated an “Exemplary” district by the Texas Education Agency
- 100% of IDEA high school graduates attend four-year colleges and universities
- 13 elementary schools
- 81% eligible for free or reduced-price lunch
- 30% English Language Learners
- 4% special education

DREAMBOX IMPLEMENTATION

- Deployed since August 2011
- 13 elementary schools
- 4,500 students
- 90–120 minutes on DreamBox per week

FUNDING SOURCE

General operating funds

ABOUT DREAMBOX LEARNING

DreamBox Learning Math combines intelligent adaptive learning™, rigorous elementary mathematics, and motivating learning environment to create individualized learning paths tailored to each student’s unique needs so that all students achieve math proficiency.

Intelligent Adaptive Learning™

→ CHALLENGE:

Support individual student learning needs to transform life trajectories

The mission of IDEA Public Schools is to transform the life trajectories of low-income students by putting them on a path to a four-year college or university. In order to achieve this goal, IDEA elementary schools must ensure that all students receive a world-class education and build the foundational math understanding needed to succeed in middle and high school. When state assessment results indicated students were not making the gains needed with a traditional learning model, IDEA Public Schools launched a comprehensive restructuring of their elementary school programs to better support individual student needs.

→ SOLUTION:

Create a true blended learning model to move students further and faster

In order to achieve IDEA Public Schools’ ambitious goals, IDEA instituted a new instructional strategy in all elementary schools—“Better IDEA”—designed to restructure the core curriculum in every classroom and embrace a blended



learning approach. The new model added a significant computer-based, individualized learning component where up to 60 students at a time work in iLearning Labs for 90–120 minutes a week.

Pablo Mejia, Director of Individualized Learning at IDEA Public Schools, says selecting the right instructional program for the blended learning component was critical. “We have up to 60 students working in our iLearning Labs at a time, so it was critical to have a quality

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— Pablo Mejia, Director of Individualized Learning, IDEA Public Schools

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— Tom Torkelson, Founder and CEO, IDEA Public Schools

instructional program that could do all the work of individualizing instruction for students, including assessing comprehension and placing students at the appropriate point in the curriculum, to allow the adult in the lab to monitor and facilitate the online learning. DreamBox Learning Math meets all of these requirements. It is adaptive to individual student needs, engaging for our students, and puts students in charge of their own learning.”

→ IMPLEMENTATION

60 hours a year of adaptive, individualized math instruction

IDEA deployed DreamBox in its iLearning Labs, where students work on the program for 90–120 minutes per week. “Our students have math 60 to 90 minutes daily in a classroom, and they attend the iLearning Hotspot two out of three days for 45 minutes each time,” says Mejia. “DreamBox is one of the three blended learning elective rotations that students visit daily, plus they’re accessing the software at home. Over the course of a school year students are averaging over 60 hours of adaptive, individualized math instruction with DreamBox.” In terms of student engagement, Mejia says DreamBox is a big hit. “The built-in, game like features of DreamBox make it very engaging for students and keep them working. In particular, the certificates and the parent

communication emails are both great ways to keep students motivated while keeping their parents informed on their child’s progress at the same time.” In order to optimize the work that students are doing in DreamBox, IDEA iLearning Lab managers at each school monitor students and analyze DreamBox reporting data to determine students’ success and areas of need. Data culled from the software helps drive interventions in classrooms and provides teachers with information on students’ strengths and weaknesses.

→ RESULTS

An efficient way to provide the ultimate differentiated instruction

Tom Torkelson, IDEA Public Schools founder and CEO, notes that the DreamBox adaptive software component of Better IDEA is “the ultimate in differentiated instruction—an efficient way to provide every child a virtual tutor that can move as quickly or slowly as the child’s performance dictates.”

Pablo Mejia says DreamBox “allows for our students to move up to other levels and objectives at their own pace. It enables each of our students—whether they’re high-achieving students, English Language Learners, or special education students—to work on math objectives that are appropriate to their level so we are adding to students’ academic gains with every minute on the program.”

Jose Perez, iLearning Hotspot manager at IDEA Academy Mission, believes work students are doing with DreamBox will be a key component to dramatically transforming student results. He says, “Students are often talking about concepts that have not yet been introduced at their grade level!”

“In order to be successful in college, students must drive their own learning and be disciplined,” concludes Mejia. “Today, our young elementary students are using DreamBox technology to take charge of their learning and build the foundational learning needed for future success.”



For more information, contact DreamBox at **877.451.7845 ext. 2**, email **schools@dreambox.com**, or visit **dreambox.com**.