

MATCHBOOK LEARNING

MERIT PREP AND MICHIGAN TECHNICAL ACADEMY

TURNING AROUND THE NATION'S LOWEST PERFORMING SCHOOLS

“If we could create a few powerful proof points—by enabling schools at the very bottom to perform at the very top with the same kids within four-to-five years—we believe we can reverse the trajectory of underperforming schools across the nation.”

SAJAN GEORGE, MATCHBOOK LEARNING

KEY FEATURES:

- ✓ Turnaround School
- ✓ Flex Blended Model
- ✓ Competency-Based Learning
- ✓ Next Generation Staffing Model

AT A GLANCE:

Merit Prep

Start Date: Fall 2012

Grades Served: 6-12

Location: Newark, NJ

Operator Type: Nonprofit

School Type: Charter

Setting: Urban

Students at Start: 80

Students at Capacity: 630

Michigan Technical Academy

Start Date: Fall 2015

Grades Served: K-8

Location: Detroit, MI

Operator Type: Nonprofit

School Type: Charter

Setting: Urban

Students at Start: 1,014

Students at Capacity: 1,014

MODEL TOOLBOX:

Learning Management System & Gradebook: Spark

Student Information System: PowerSchool

Assessment Tools and Approaches: Performance Series (Scantron adaptive assessments), Illuminate, CoreSpring

Digital Content Providers: Compass Learning, ST Math, IXL, iReady

Hardware: Netbooks for students

Matchbook Learning envisions an ecosystem of public education that applies the very best turnaround design to the very worst schools. The goal is to lead schools out of the bottom five percent into the top 20 percent. What works for a school district's lowest-performing schools will eventually work for all schools, creating a transformed education ecosystem in which all students thrive.

What is the very best turnaround design? For Matchbook Learning, it is competency-based blended learning—combining the very best of what teachers can do with the very best that technology can offer. Competency-based blended learning meets students where they actually are rather than teaching to their grade level, helps them achieve one or more years of growth in an academic year, and sets them on the path to reaching their life and career goals.

Matchbook Learning launched its first student-centered blended turnaround model prototype in 2011 with a bottom five percent K-8 school in Detroit Public Schools. After just two years, the school received state recognition as a “Reward School” for schools either in the top five percent or those with similar trajectories. Matchbook Learning launched a second prototype in 2012 with the Education Achievement Authority (EAA) of Michigan. Both of these schools are no longer in the bottom five percent.

After launching a third prototype in 2013 with another EAA school, Matchbook Learning shifted to a fourth prototype, this time with two charter school turnarounds, Merit Prep in Newark, NJ in 2014 and Michigan Technical Academy in Detroit in

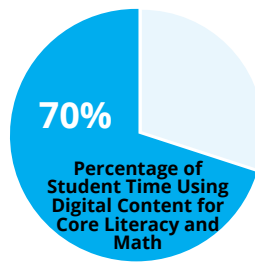
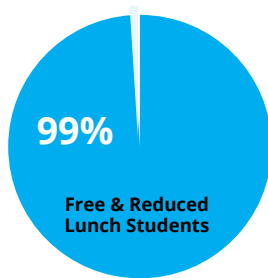
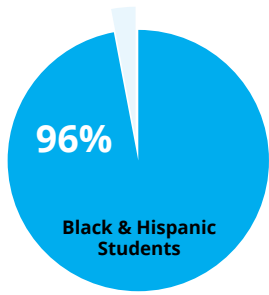
2015. The shift to charters ensures that Matchbook can stay with the schools beyond the initial turnaround and along the trajectory from bottom five percent to top 20 percent.

Armed with a learning curve that now spans four prototypes, Matchbook Learning has been able to successfully iterate and improve upon its powerful combination of student-centered learning, teacher capacity-building, and turnaround management.

Matchbook Learning hires a principal and two full-time program managers to implement their design. The two program managers conduct 40 observations and 20 one-on-one coaching sessions per teacher per year. This is critical to scaffolding teachers' capacity for student-centered learning, customizing teacher development so teachers can effectively personalize their instruction. Teachers are recruited, selected, and managed by Matchbook via a management contract.

Learning is leveled according to students' ability as determined by adaptive assessments, not by age or grade level. Within their levels, each student progresses through a learning cycle that includes four stages: Learn & Practice, Peer & Teacher Conference, Apply, and then Assess. The four stages are housed within Spark, Matchbook's learning management system.

Each stage builds in choice and provides for teacher and student interaction. Students begin the “Learn & Practice” activities in Spark selecting from their “Playlist” for a particular learning target. Playlists include research-based third-party content



BLENDED SUBJECTS:
Math, Science, ELA, Social Science

as well as internal and teacher-created content. In the “Apply” phase, students must demonstrate three pieces of evidence and score at least a three out of four (mastery) in order to take their assessment and move to the next learning target. Students move at their own pace based on mastery, monitored and encouraged by their teacher. This process ensures that student achievement is continually monitored, assessed, and targeted.

In addition to the learning cycle, Matchbook incorporates group project-based learning (PBL) for each core subject every day. PBL ensures that students learn problem solving and 21st century collaborative skills

in addition to their individual learning progressions.

Matchbook was founded on the premise that technology-based innovations offer the first and best chance for scalable success to meet the need of the nation’s failing schools. The model is both sustainable on public funding and scalable.

By also engaging teacher’s unique motivations and abilities in the process of personalized instruction, Matchbook Learning’s scalable model ensures that all students have the opportunity to learn and succeed academically.

With a model that appeals to students’ and teachers’ desire for au-

BY THE NUMBERS:

Merit Prep
Year 1 public revenue per pupil: \$14,520

Year 1 expenses per pupil: \$16,500

Year 4 revenue per pupil: \$14,823

Year 4 expenses per pupil: \$14,823

Years to sustainability: 1

Michigan Technical Academy
Year 1 public revenue per pupil: \$9,796

Year 1 expenses per pupil: \$9,558

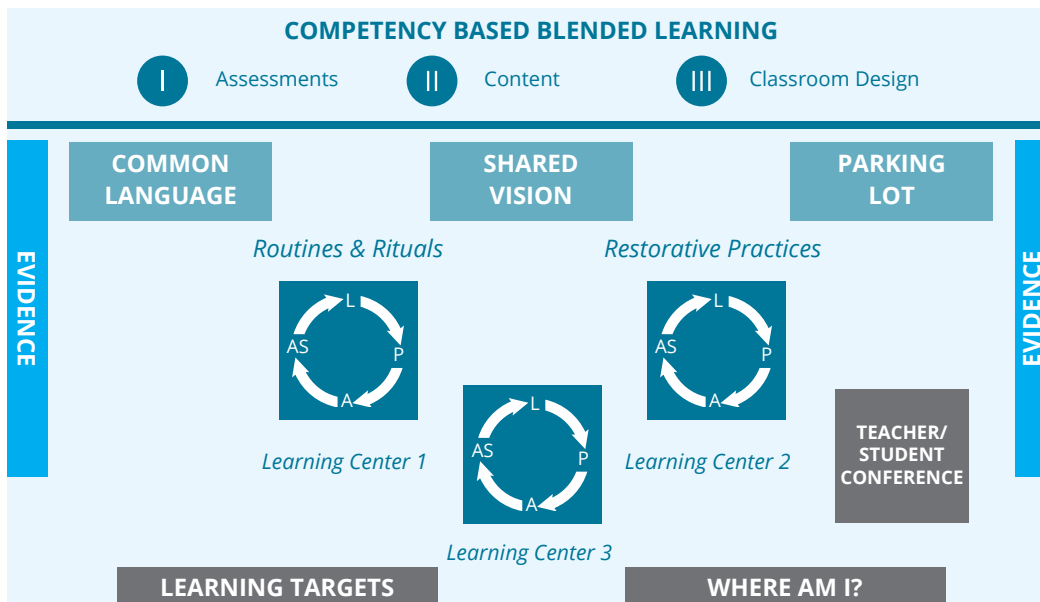
Year 4 revenue per pupil: \$9,782

Year 4 expenses per pupil: \$9,507

Years to sustainability: 0

tonomy, focuses on mastery of goals and a broader sense of life purpose, and relates specifically to parent and community stakeholders, Matchbook Learning believes it will enact real and sustainable change in the nation’s public education.

TURNAROUND FRAMEWORK: 206-STEP PLAN



Through a prescriptive 206-step project plan, Matchbook Learning lays out its process for turning around failing schools. Assessments, content, and classroom design are key components of that plan wherein Matchbook Learning works with the community and school on mission alignment and student-centered practices grounded in evidence.

In the competency-based blended learning model, students work through the Learn & Practice, Conference, Apply, and Assess learning cycle and teachers meet daily with students for one-on-one conferences, small group instruction, and goal setting.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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