

Newman–Crows Landing Unified School District

Newman, California

Online credit recovery program for high school and alternative education students helps district achieve 100% graduation rate and keep kids in school

Situated about an hour-and-a-half southeast of San Jose on the west side of the San Joaquin Valley, the Newman-Crows Landing Unified School District (NCLUSD) is a traditional school district, located in Newman, California, serving the communities of Newman, Crows Landing, and Diablo Grande. NCLUSD uses Stride Learning Solutions online credit recovery curriculum to help increase graduation rates and keep students in school.

When Randy Fillpot became the district's superintendent in 2013, the district was using online credit recovery courses he knew were not rigorous enough. Fillpot shared, "The program back then, for example, made it pretty easy for students to cheat." A few years later, in 2017, NCLUSD was introduced to Stride Learning Solutions online credit recovery curriculum, specifically designed for high school students to recover credit for a course without having to repeat the course. Fillpot and his team found that Stride's credit recovery program was much more robust and engaging than the previous credit recovery programs they had used. Fillpot shared, "By using Stride Learning Solutions credit recovery we had four years straight of graduating all of our seniors."



The credit recovery program is located in the district's two high schools, Orestimba High School and West Side Valley High School, and has steadily grown and become extremely successful. To help support its growth, in 2019 each high school added new study halls specifically for students taking credit recovery courses. Support is provided to credit recovery students by two study hall teachers, three learning directors, and two summer school teachers.

Rick Gonzalez, principal of West Side Valley High School, shared, "This is an access and equity situation for our district's credit recovery students. Our credit recovery program is giving these students opportunities many other schools

do not have, and we are grateful to be able to provide that for our kids. And these opportunities would not be possible if we did not have credit recovery curriculum from Stride Learning Solutions."

Dedicated Support Structure Ensures Success

Using a district-issued Chromebook or other personal device, students engage with their credit recovery courses in the dedicated credit recovery study hall at school, and they can also access these courses outside of school from home or other locations.

DISTRICT

Type of school:
High school and alternative education school

Grades:
9–12

Program started:
2016

District enrollment:
3,200

Students served:
Orestimba High School **111**
West Side Valley High School **30**

Ethnicity:
78% Hispanic
15.16% White
1.62% Black
.81% Filipino
.59% Asian
.22% Native American
.16% Pacific Islander
3.44% Multiple/other

Free/Reduced-price lunch:
Orestimba High School **66%**
West Side Valley High School **70%**

English learners:
Orestimba High School **25.2%**
West Side Valley High School **36.6%**

Staff:
1 High school principal
1 Alternative education principal
3 Learning directors
2 Study Hall teachers
2 Summer school teachers

Instructional model:
Online learning in school lab

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Comprehensive Stride Learning Solutions online credit recovery program at NCLUSD helps increase graduate rates and keep students in school.

Because of the credit recovery program's success, NCLUSD began offering a dedicated study hall to support students who are engaging in credit recovery.

From 2017 to 2021, the percent of A-G students qualifying to enter the State of California higher education system grew from 17% to 53%.

Approximately 64% of NCLUSD students participate in a CTE pathway utilizing Stride Learning Solutions career readiness courses.

Credit recovery program learning directors and teachers meet regularly with students and parents/caregivers to provide a support structure for student success.

Students are assigned to credit recovery study hall for two 90-minute sessions a week. A teacher is present in each study hall to provide direct support to assist students as they complete their credit recovery courses. In addition to the teachers, students also have an assigned Learning Director (LD). There are three LDs serving Orestimba High School and one that is shared with West Side Valley High School, the district's alternative school. LDs help register students in the

correct online credit recovery courses and monitor their progress. Courses are self-directed and teachers serve as facilitators alongside the LDs. Each of the LDs has a specific caseload of students to support.

Matthew Clark serves as the study hall teacher for Orestimba High School working with credit recovery students during that period. Clark explained his role as being the taskmaster, providing an environment in which students can focus. Clark sets clear expectations for his students. He explained, "The students and I work together each week to set goals to ensure they are progressing and not procrastinating."

To ensure these goals are met, the LDs manage their students' cases individually. At the start of each year, LDs send out a letter to each family letting them know their students are deficient in their graduation requirements. The letter includes specific dates for quarterly checkpoints so that parents know when they will receive an update on their student's progress. By the third quarter meetings LDs inform parents and students of options still available for completing credit recovery courses. Progress checkpoints include meeting with students and sometimes with parents as well.

The NCLUSD team works together to help support students no matter what it takes. Dola emphasized that students always have access to their teachers and LDs, which is critical for the credit recovery students, as many are at-risk students. Dola explained, "Most of our students neither have the structure at home nor the skills to be successful. Providing them this structured approach gives them a big advantage."

One Course at a Time

Students enroll in and complete one credit recovery course at a time. Originally, students signed up for all their credit recovery classes at the same time, but over time teachers noticed students having a hard time focusing and getting passing grades. Clark noted, "Students struggled, especially those who were easily distracted. Some never really finished any one course. They just hadn't developed the time management or

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– Randy Fillpot,
Superintendent

“We work very closely with the study hall teachers. For example, each week we give them a spreadsheet highlighting deficiencies in credit recovery course progress and completions. When the students finish a class, we place that class on their transcript and work to keep them moving forward with their next class. Once they’ve completed all their credit recovery classes, we enroll them in a regular study hall class. The goal for us is to facilitate the kids to get their credits, graduate, and meet their California A–G requirements.”

– Manpreet Dola,
Learning Director

organizational skills to be successful. And so, by trimming it down to one course at a time, it was easier for them to focus.” Clark added, “By concentrating on one course at a time, students don’t have to worry about everything at once. They really do a lot better, not just grade-wise, but also in understanding the content.” Dola shared, “I think our one-class-at-a-time process has not only helped the students, but it has helped us as well.”

Students have a minimum goal of completing ten percent of their course each week, thereby finishing a course in ten weeks. This process helps keep students on track and grades above passing. Dola emphasized, “We work with the student and parent to develop a timeline for the student to finish so that everyone is on the same page to get the student over the finish line to graduate.”

A key aspect of Stride Learning Solutions credit recovery courses that the NCLUSD team appreciates is how students can bypass curriculum by demonstrating mastery of what they already understand and know. This mastery-based approach really motivates students. Once students complete a course, they email their study hall teacher who checks their work and assigns them a grade. Then the teacher lets the student’s LD know their grade and that they are ready to enroll in their next credit recovery class. Dola and the other two LDs also add the course information to each student’s transcript to update their academic record.

Staying in School and Graduating Spell Success

Over the five years using the Stride Learning Solutions credit recovery curriculum, NCLUSD has seen many successes. Kim Bettencourt, Director of Curriculum and Instruction and Title Nine Coordinator, shared, “Many students in the alternative education program catch up on their credits and re-enter the traditional high school to graduate. Additionally, in the five years we’ve been using Stride Learning Solutions credit recovery curriculum, our percent of A–G students qualifying to enter the State of California system has more than tripled, growing from 17% to 53%.” The NCLUSD staff believes that the Stride Learning Solutions credit recovery approach has resulted in a near-perfect graduation rate for their student population. Students who do not make May graduation are able to take needed credit recovery courses over the summer and receive their diploma in August. Rick Gonzalez explained, “If it wasn’t for Stride Learning Solutions, I don’t know that we would have been able to have that high of a graduation rate.” Superintendent Fillpot shared, “Due to the success of our Stride Learning Solutions credit recovery curriculum and our robust support structure, we no longer need to shift as many of our students to the alternative education school.”

Many students have expressed positive sentiments about the NCLUSD’s credit recovery program. One recent graduate of Orestimba High School, for example, shared, “My credit recovery courses allowed me to make up in areas where I lacked success. It was a second chance given to me by my counselors as an option instead of giving up on me.” Another graduate said, “I’m grateful for these online credit recovery courses because they’ve helped me and have given me the opportunity to graduate and go to college and be able to do what I want to do.” Specifically speaking of the support he received from the teachers and LDs, another graduate of Orestimba High School expressed, “The teachers and staff at NCLUSDs don’t just come here to teach and get a paycheck. They really want to help kids succeed and graduate.”