

## Novel's Web-based courses keep Harford County students afloat

ABERDEEN, Md. — Credit deficiencies grew on Katy Moran's\* transcript as she struggled to keep up in the traditional classroom. Her teachers in Harford County Public Schools didn't think she would graduate and worried she might drop out altogether.

"Not everybody learns in the same traditional setting— she was basically left to drown," said Mark Buzminsky, principal of the district's Center for Educational Opportunity Alternative Education Program.

"We gave her the opportunity to swim a little bit and she was able to pull herself out."

For Katy, that opportunity came in the form of EdOptions™ Web-based Novel™: a library of 39 rigorous core and elective courses that can be taken from anywhere with an Internet connection. Novel, the cornerstone product of the company's Stars Suite™, is designed to give students more flexibility and course choices to help them stay on track, catch up, or accelerate their academic progress.

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Students typically take courses in assessment mode, a unique course delivery method that first evaluates their level of content mastery, and then customizes the class to focus on areas where they need improvement.

When students discover they can use the Web-based courses to recover credit while working at their own pace, they're "relieved," Buzminsky said. "They know they can earn the credits they need — that's a big plus for them."

And the system is proving to be a positive addition for teachers, too.

"They like the easy accessibility and grading, and it's extremely simple to use once they've had the training," Buzminsky said. "It frees up their time to assist students who might need additional help."

Since the alternative school first started using Novel in 2004, graduation rates have steadily increased by nearly 40 percent. Now other area schools have taken notice and requested to use the successful program.

Katy's one example of that success.

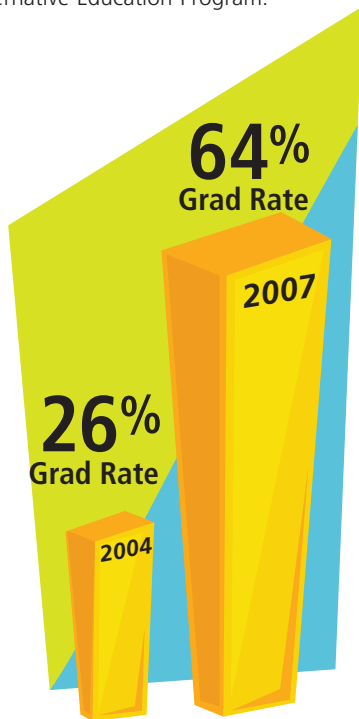
Within months of entering the program, Katy graduated from high school and then entered a nursing program at a local community college.

Results like Katy's are encouraging to teachers and administrators alike, Buzminsky said.

"Our job is to identify where it is students need to catch up," he said. "Then give them the hope to finish."

Thanks to Novel, Harford teachers now have a resource to help Harford County Public Schools students not only wade through academic challenges, but find the hope they need to swim to educational success.

\*Not actual student name. Name changed to protect the student's privacy



Center for Educational Opportunity  
Alternative Education Program  
Three years of using Novel



### Profile:

Center for Educational Opportunity  
Alternative Education Program  
Aberdeen, Maryland  
School Size: 300 students

**Previous graduation rate: 26%**

**Graduation rate after Stars Suite: 64%**

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