

How Unique Learning System Increased Scores across All Subject Areas on the NCEXTEND1 Assessments in Davidson County Schools



Davidson County Schools is in the Piedmont area of North Carolina, home to 36 schools and nearly 18,000 students, pre-K through grade 12. The district has elementary, middle, and high schools; career and early college high schools; a K-12 special needs school, and a virtual school.

The Story of Davidson County Schools

The district prides itself on the strong collaboration within the district and across its schools. It's grounded in their shared mission to prepare students for life beyond the classroom with the ability to navigate challenges and form successes.

For its special education population, the district aimed to help students and teachers develop a curriculum that optimizes student learning, streamlines data collection, and supports stronger goal writing for students' Individualized Learning Programs (IEPs).

The Challenge

Davidson County Schools lacked a common curriculum that collected data and helped adapted teachers write compliant IEPs more efficiently. They needed an all-inclusive curriculum that was a good fit for their population of students and met their district expectations.

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The Solution

A major component of Unique Learning System (ULS) is its extended standards alignment for every state, ensuring students receive age- and grade-appropriate content within every thematic unit. For administrators, it ensures their teachers—new, experienced, and substitute—comply with IDEA. And for teachers, it saves hours of lesson planning. Davidson County Schools OCS/Adapted Program Specialist Kristi Dennis noted, “The curriculum aligns with the standards, so there is no wondering [whether] what is being taught is part of the extended content standards.”



The Solution, cont.

In addition, having one shared district curriculum for their modified learners allowed the district to streamline the support their administrators provided to teachers during classroom observations. Teachers could also benefit from each other's strengths by sharing ideas.

Kristi Dennis found that n2y “had reliable and quick responses from the Customer Success Advocates for our district.”

“Because ULS provides the main lessons, teachers could easily find supplemental activities when aligning content with extended content standards”.

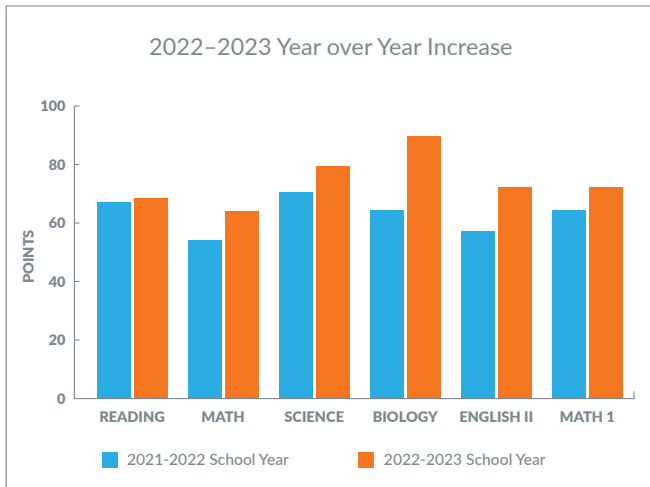
UNIQUE LEARNING SYSTEM ALSO PROVIDED:

- **Instructional support:** ready-made lesson plans, implementation guides, and other teacher resources to support effective core academic instruction
- **Student-focused content:** standards-aligned, evidence- and research-based instruction that is both age and grade-level appropriate
- **Robust data:** automatic data collection and detailed reports that demonstrate student progress and growth for IEPs



The Results

Students working in Unique Learning System take the North Carolina Alternative Assessments called NCEXTEND1. In the 2022–2023 school year, students increased their scores in every area from the year prior, with Biology going up by over 25 points and Math 1 by almost 17 points. In addition to showing growth, students met grade-level or college career readiness standards in every category.



“I truly believe a huge reason why our scores were much better was because of Unique. Teachers that have begun implementing it with more fidelity say that they know [student] scores were better because the ULS Checkpoints and Benchmarks were so similar to the test,” recalled Kristi Dennis.

Unique Learning System also increased teacher satisfaction across the district. Kristi added, “Teachers feel more confident in their teaching. [They] know if they follow ULS they are teaching the extended content standards.”

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Building off the success of using ULS, Davidson County Schools began using other n2y solutions to address the learning needs of the whole student and save teachers time. They use Polaris to develop and monitor their IEPs, News2you to engage students in the world around them, and SymbolStix PRIME to integrate symbol-supported communication and instruction throughout the school day. In addition, the district demonstrated its commitment to teachers by investing in n2y Professional Learning to ensure each solution was implemented with fidelity and supported district goals.

