



# NEF STEM+ Academies 2017-2018 Testimonials

## Bellaire Local Schools, OH

*"We have great teachers who really push our students to do well and encourage them to set and reach goals. The incentive program we have tied to SuccessMaker really pushes our students to work hard in the program. Emphasizing gains and effort helps build a growth mindset that students can benefit from for years to come."*

-Ben Doyle, Academy Director

*"Bellaire Elementary and Middle Schools also use Successmaker (Reading and Math) for academic enrichment at our 21st Century Grant After School Programs...we collaborate with the daytime school to double student incentives ....it's a "win-win" situation!!!"*

-Dorothy Vannest, After School Academy Director

*"I really enjoy using Success Maker in my third-grade classroom. I like that it is individualized and offers my students a chance to excel at their highest potential. It also gives students positive reinforcement based on the material that they are individually working on in a particular subject. I will definitely continue to use this program going forward."*

-Brooke Peters, Third Grade Teacher

## Berwick High School, PA

*"Since our partnership with NEF began in 2015, the Berwick Area School has saved well over one million dollars in lost revenue. The price of NEF services is significantly lower than any private vendor we've researched and the savings we've realized have allowed us to re-invest funds in extended learning opportunities for students in ways we had not previously envisioned. Our partnership with NEF has created enhanced learning opportunities for our students, teachers, and even the community. We would highly recommend NEF as a partner for any school district who is looking to enhance its' on-line learning opportunities for students in a cost-efficient manner."*

-Wayne Brookhart, Superintendent

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*“The courses offered through the Berwick Cyber Academy, in particular Spanish, have allowed students who for many reasons can't take it in the traditional classroom setting. Learning a foreign language isn't easy but breaking up the course into easy to manage modules makes it user friendly and the students' cyber teachers are readily available for help”.*

**-MK, Cyber Spanish Teacher**

*“The BCA provides an outlet for both advancement and recovery of credits. My daughter is enrolled in an AP course which utilizes the online system for classwork, and she loves the idea of working at her pace in times that are convenient for her. The recovery aspect allows students to gain credit for classes in which they were unsuccessful. It also allows transfer students to gain credits required by our district for graduation. Several of our students have been able to graduate on time with the aid of BCA coursework.*

*On a personal level, I have used the NEF classes to obtain hours for Act 48 credit. I have learned aspects of computer software which makes me more efficient in my job. I look forward to completing more of these classes in the future.”*

**-CD, Cyber Science Teacher**

*“Our BCA has provided another opportunity for students to complete their high school requirements. I personally know some students who have had medical issues and were missing classes due to appointments that needed to be made. Having the option of doing cyber in place of coming to the building has saved many students from falling behind and/or repeating classes.*

*There are so many reasons (some valid and some not) that make students late or absent from school. Having this cyber option helps to keep them on track and earn the diploma that is so important.*

*The BCA is also important to those students who want to get ahead or who strive to do more than the basic requirements. Many of our STEM students want to take AP classes all day in building, but don't have room to fit a health or history class. They have the option of taking that course online independently so that they can challenge themselves in the areas they want to pursue in college.”*

**-VW, Cyber Math Teacher**

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## Brocton, NY

*"My students are enjoying the weekly updates and LOVE to see their names on the medal board we've created."*

-Marie Persch, Teacher

*"My students are very excited to see their names on the classroom chart and the grade level chart in the hallway! They ASK ME about their scores so that they can keep track of when they make gains! The medal board and upcoming assembly is something they are very excited about!"*

-Tobi Davidson, Teacher

*My students love Successmaker days! After each session, they ask me what their gain is, so they are invested in doing well. So far, it's proven to be engaging and motivating.*

-Marieanne Fabiano, Teacher

*"Successmaker has been a success. Since using Successmaker, my daughter has increased two grade levels, and is now being mainstreamed more into general education classrooms."*

-Beverly Sutton, Parent of Special Education Student

## Gallia County Local Schools, OH

*This year has been an awesome year for our kiddos at our center. Just a little background information on our center kiddos. All of our kiddos are in a residential treatment facility. They are going through a program to reunite with their families or new foster homes. These students come in, most of the time, very credit deficit and in need of some major credit recovery. Gradpoint gives us the flexibility to use the program as a credit recovery platform as well as an online student platform. Being able to use the program in both ways creates a perfect program for our use.*

*NEF offers funding for incentives. I can assure you without the incentives our numbers would not be what they are. This year we seen over 200 high school and middle school credits awarded to our students. For every credit they complete they earned a \$20.00 gift card. They would count their credits and email me and ask when are we shopping I have \$80.00 dollars to spend. This is our biggest incentive that we use. This is an excellent way to motivate students. Another way we used NEF funds as incentives were having reward parties throughout the year. They worked extremely hard to be part of the parties. Making sure they were getting their work to where it should be according to our chart so they could attend the parties. We had other incentives with NEF but those two were our biggest. We want to thank NEF for a GREAT 3 years.*

-Lori Bevan, Coordinator

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## Lehighton Area Middle School, PA

*This is my fourth year involved in the STEM+ Academy program at Lehighton Area School District. When I started working with NEF and the STEM+ Academy I was the assistant director. Last year, 2016-2017 was my first year as the Academy Director and it was my first year to run the incentive program as my own. We use SuccessMaker with our students in grades Kindergarten through 6th Grade. We reward students based on the highest Initial Placement score in each subject in each grade level, monthly and yearly growth as an individual, and average monthly and yearly growth as a classroom. Our incentive program is completely STEM based with prizes all revolving around STEM concepts (science kits, robots, engineering kits). At the end of the year we reward one classroom in each grade level (K-6) that shows the highest growth in SuccessMaker with a field trip to the Franklin Institute in Philadelphia (K-4) or the National Aquarium in Baltimore's Inner Harbor (5&6). We also reward certain students based on effort and performance in SuccessMaker with the opportunity to attend one of three STEM based summer camps we offer on our campus through Penn State University.*

*Our STEM+ Academy has allowed our district to create a focus and vision for STEAM education in our district, specifically in grades K-6. Our STEM based prizes have definitely helped motivate the students to do their best in SuccessMaker and our teachers regularly acknowledge student progress in SuccessMaker by using the bronze, silver, gold classroom charts. Each year our teachers have become more familiar with the program and continue utilize SuccessMaker to help drive instruction.*

**-Melissa Volcskai, STEM Coordinator and Academy Director**

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## Martins Ferry City Schools, OH

*Our SuccessMaker operations went smoothly this year and our Academy earned a Merit Academy honor this year. In our 3 years of existence we have been Merit Academy two times and Academy of the Year once. We are very proud and grateful for all the hard work put in by our staff, administration and students to enable us to perform this well every year. Our students under the direction of Mr. Greg Steele took top honors in the Minecraft competition for the second year in a row. Congratulations on another job well done! A project we are really excited about that we initiated this year is Exploring Robotics. Our 7<sup>th</sup> grade science class piloted the Exploring Robotics program this year and we hope to expand on this next year.*

**-Bruce Hotlosz, Academy Director**

*I am extremely proud and excited about what's going on in our district's STEM Academy with us being named Academy of the year or a Merit Academy award winner for three years in a row. This speaks volumes of our students and staffs determination and work ethic. The project I see benefiting our students the most is the Exploring Robotics in the class room. I am hoping we can expand this exceptional project into grades K-12. I believe if fully implemented this project will provide our students with opportunities to become leaders in a field we see growing at an enormous rate. In closing, I would like to congratulate the students in Mr. Steele's programing class for winning the Minecraft programing contest two years in a row.*

**-Jim Fogle, Superintendent**

## Somerton School District, AZ

*I teach a SEI third grade class with 24 students. My class consists of 7 students who receive special education services for both math and reading. Some of these students are still working on numbers and letter recognition. Also, 3 students that are in a Teacher Assistant Team (TAT) for their learning needs, and 5 students that are new comers from different countries. The remainder of students started school in the United States last year. Second Language students encounter many challenges everyday. Successmaker has been a great intervention program for my class this year. SM has been providing them with lessons and activities to meet their needs and gaps in reading, math and academic vocabulary. Many of my students have shown more than a year growth in both subjects. The lessons and activities are scaffold based on students' performance. As a teacher, I can see my students moving forward in the lessons, also how excited, motivated and more importantly successful they feel when they are in Successmaker!*

**-Anna Fermanis, Academy Director**

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## Steubenville City Schools, OH

*SuccessMaker promotes a tiered system approach (such as the Response to Intervention framework) across all classroom environments within the educational setting. This intervention and progress monitoring tool increases skills and tailors instruction to the needs for typical developing, at-risk, and students identified for special education students. Overall it is an asset to promote data-based decision making, supports teachers in guided instruction, while providing target lessons at the student's individual pace.*

-Dr. Rachel Tomon, School Psychologist

*"As a parent, I love that my kids WANT to do this at home after school! My second grade daughter asks to be taken in early to go to the lab with our facilitator to do SuccessMaker at 7:30 am! As an administrator the data that we receive from Success Maker to use in our IEP's and evaluations is essential. The students who utilize Success Maker have shown growth and truly enjoy the program."*

-Sarah Elliott, Director of Special Education

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