



## Success Story

Indiana Agriculture & Technology School

MORGANTOWN, INDIANA

**Takeaway:** Focusing on a combination of hands-on experiences and rigorous curriculum, Indiana Agriculture & Technology School has created an engaging educational experience that leads to student success and increased school enrollment.

### Strategic Partnerships Lead to Academic Success

“The key thing that makes it work is engagement,” said Keith Marsh, Executive Director of Indiana Agriculture & Technology School. “Every student here has an individual plan,” he said. “That’s why our kids do so well.”

When Marsh launched a charter school in 2018–2019, he was looking to develop a school that combined virtual learning with hands-on learning opportunities. Focused on agriculture and technology sciences, the school is designed to offer career pathways through partnerships with agribusiness and corporations, offering career opportunities after graduation. Indiana Agriculture utilizes Edgenuity Instructional Services as its core curriculum and pairs it with enrichment experiences on a local farm. Through carefully cultivated partnerships designed to prepare students for college and career, students can choose from a variety of specialized courses such as robotics and welding. Students also have the opportunity to earn certifications through the IATS Agriculture Pathways or Drone Certification Program offered at the school.

“Virtual learning isn’t a bad word.” – KEITH MARSH, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

#### FLEXIBILITY OF A BLENDED-LEARNING PROGRAM

Because of the school’s blended learning structure, learning didn’t change much when COVID-19 shuttered schools across the country in March of 2020. Indiana Agriculture students continued working on their Edgenuity curriculum from home and joined Edgenuity’s teachers for virtual interactive blackboard sessions as needed. “The Edgenuity teachers are connected with kids, and that engagement has grown immensely over the years,” said Marsh.

Additionally, Marsh explained that “we have designed an engaging, self-paced program” where students are motivated to complete their courses. “We’ve benefitted immensely,” he continued, “because Edgenuity isn’t a one-size-fits-all solution. That’s why this year’s academic data on student’s performance is rockin’.”



## MAXIMIZING DISTANCE LEARNING

Indiana Agriculture also got creative with its hands-on component by livestreaming activities on the farm. This method proved successful throughout the pandemic, and they plan to continue to use video to scale-up their capacity and build a curriculum archive. For routine procedures like inoculating livestock, their teachers can record the video and make it available to students for review. Unique and often unpredictable teaching moments like the birth of an animal can also be recorded and incorporated into the curriculum, regardless of when a student takes the course.

“The goal was always to grow slowly and deliberately to ensure our students are getting the best experience possible,” said Marsh. And now, he and his team are realizing that a video archive gives them the scalability needed to provide consistent, engaging experiences to more students. This also opens up the possibilities of satellite campuses across the state, which may focus on other agribusiness areas such as greenhouse production and goat farming.

## SETTING THE STANDARD

“The key thing that makes our program work is student engagement. They’re not just online by themselves. They’re engaging with Edgenuity teachers, watching livestreams, attending Zoom classes with our teachers, and visiting the campus (when appropriate),” said Marsh. “When people talk about kids losing learning because they’re on a virtual platform, it’s not because of the platform, it’s because the student is not engaged.”



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– KEITH MARSH, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

He emphasized the importance of the teacher–student relationship and noted how their students have open communication with the teachers and each other. Through its evolving partnership with Edgenuity, Indiana Agriculture has also amplified the resources available to students with special needs. “We don’t give up on kids,” said Marsh, who added that if a student is willing to put in the work, “we stick with them and give them the tools to succeed.”

“We want to set the standard for this type of program,” said Marsh, who emphasized that “Virtual learning is going to continue to grow across school communities and students can be successful in this platform if we engage and support them appropriately.”