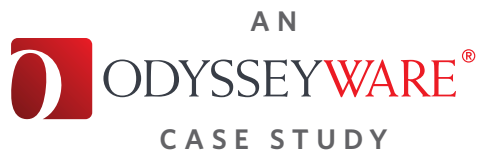


# ARKANSAS SCHOOL RETAINS 300+ POTENTIAL DROPOUTS WITH ODYSSEYWARE

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# Arkansas School Retains 300+ Potential Dropouts with ODYSSEYWARE

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## PROFILE

### SCHOOL

**Name:** Alma Opportunity School, Alma School District

**Location:** Alma, Arkansas

**Location Type:** Rural Town

### ODYSSEYWARE

**Enrollment:** 25-30 Students Annually

**Focus:** Alternative Education, Dropout Prevention, Credit Recovery

**Grade level:** 9-12

**Period Examined:** 2005-2011

## BACKGROUND

Alma High School serves approximately 1,050 students in grades 9-12, including 25-30 students at the Alma Opportunity School for Alternative Education. The Alma Opportunity School, a satellite brick-and-mortar school on the high school campus, was started to provide at-risk students in danger of dropping out an alternative option for recovering credits and returning to grade level in time for graduation. Alma Opportunity School, now in its seventh year, serves students of lower social economic status, those with life circumstance challenges, and those with low success rates in the traditional school.

## CHALLENGE

Alma Opportunity School needed to find a flexible curriculum that allowed staff to address each student individually while still providing a rigorous academic experience. Switching to ODYSSEYWARE after using a competitor for the school's first year helped the Opportunity School to meet state-aligned requirements while setting achievement-pass thresholds by student. Controlling pacing with ODYSSEYWARE allowed alternative teachers to address true mastery learning and achievement progression rather than just clocking seat time.

“ You can't put a price on the students' lives that have been changed for the better.”

*Gregg Grant, Principal of Alma Opportunity School, Recipient of 2006-2007 Arkansas Assistant Principal of the Year Award*

## APPROACH

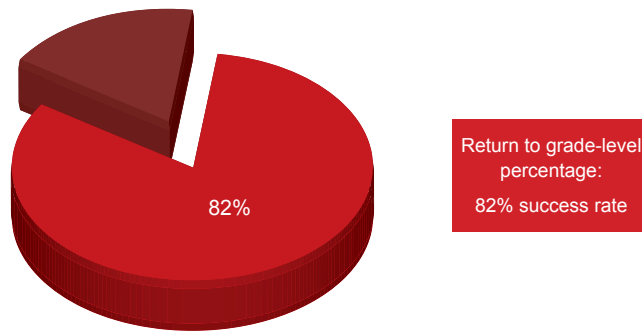
The Alma High School coordinates with state policies to diagnose at-risk students for placement in the Alma Opportunity School. High school counselor involvement, parent and student meetings, and transcript evaluation help Alma High School correctly place student in ODYSSEYWARE courses to recover or accelerate credits based on academic needs.

Enrolled students can work at their own pace to return to grade level and be placed back into Alma High School and graduate with their class, or they can graduate directly from the Alma Opportunity School. The goal is to have students in the Alma Opportunity School for one semester so they can earn needed credits (up to 7 to 9 courses) to stay at grade level. In addition, fifth year seniors can come to the Opportunity School and retake a failed course (often a second semester course) more quickly and don't have to wait a full year to retake the course because of the high school class schedule.

ODYSSEYWARE partners with the Alma Opportunity School in providing individualized educational options to students, along with offering students the opportunity to recover credits and do homework outside traditional school hours. With ODYSSEYWARE's online access available 24/7, those students with Internet access can move forward with schoolwork during hours that are convenient to them and from wherever they are.

## CONCLUSION

The following statistics show the success rate of Alma Opportunity School in helping students return to grade level for an on-time graduation after using ODYSSEYWARE:



On average, four of five students return to Alma High School to graduate at grade level or graduate directly from the Alma Opportunity School.

ODYSSEYWARE has helped Alma Opportunity School students regain course credits at an astonishing rate. With a success rate of over 80% for enrolled students, this vital alternative school in rural Arkansas has given at-risk students the possibility of keeping their education on pace. Over the past six-year history of Alma Opportunity School, a total of over 300-plus potential dropouts have been retained and have earned their right to graduate on time with their classmates. That's 300-plus smiling faces that walked in their cap and gown and were handed a high school diploma.

Principal Gregg Grant credits ODYSSEYWARE with being a crucial element in that success. Together with one-on-one teacher support, students get to utilize ODYSSEYWARE's individualized curriculum, which helps support an enriching alternative learning environment, and students get a chance to chase their dreams. Success isn't just happening with students. In 2010, Alma Opportunity School teacher Bridget Stahler was awarded the 2010 Arkansas Alternative Education Teacher of the Year Award. Quality instruction hand-in-hand with ODYSSEYWARE's quality content obviously makes for a winning partnership for this Arkansas school.

What's more, an estimated \$2 million in funds has been saved by this district by keeping potential dropouts in school. Saving this potential loss in funds, the Alma Opportunity School through ODYSSEYWARE has allowed valuable funding to continue to go to the students in this state who need it most. Improving more than the bottom line, Alma Opportunity School is proud of how it is helping change student lives. Using ODYSSEYWARE, students are able to achieve more and strive toward a brighter future, overcoming any life circumstance or past hindrance. ODYSSEYWARE supports this vision by turning potential dropouts into confident high school graduates who are prepared to conquer the world.