Colonial Intermediate Partners with **Ori Learning** to Hone Soft Skills for Students with Special Needs

Background

During the global pandemic, Colonial Intermediate Unit, which provides educational, administrative, and technology services to more than 175,000 students–especially those with special needs–throughout the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, sought an online learning solution that would teach transitional and soft skills to students with special needs while also keeping them engaged on a remote platform.

The Challenge

Chapter 339 of the Pennsylvania School Code mandates that all school districts in the Commonwealth offer a comprehensive, sequential program of guidance services for children enrolled in Kindergarten through Grade 12. The program stresses career and post-graduate life readiness. While the Act provides students with ways of demonstrating postsecondary preparedness, the global pandemic shut down in-person learning, limiting opportunities, especially for students with special needs.

These students were severely affected by the transition to remote learning. 31 states reported declines in graduation rates of students with special needs during the pandemic. In a nationwide poll, more than half of school districts reported that it became "more difficult" or "substantially more difficult" to meet the requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the nation's special education law.

The Solution

Colonial Intermediate Unit partnered with Ori Learning–formerly known as ONEder Learning– to provide an online and remote curriculum to students with special learning requirements.

"Ori allowed us to connect with students in a way that maintained a high level of potential outcome for students because of the meaningfulness and the relevancy of the content embedded within that online curriculum," said Dan Cullen, Regional Supervisor of Special Education for Colonial Intermediate Unit.

Among Ori's solutions are a Social-Emotional Learning Curriculum, which provides students with opportunities to explore new skills and strategies, and a Transition Curriculum, which educates students on the fundamental "soft skills" needed to achieve and maintain successful employment.

Transition Curriculum

Ori's Transition Curriculum is designed for students with mild disabilities, ages 14 and up, who will be making the transition to life after high school. The research-based, blended curriculum gives educators what they need to teach the skills that are key to success in post-secondary life while meeting their student's Individual Education Plan (IEP) goals.

- Eight courses that are critical to success in the workplace
- Ready-made lessons, aligned assessments, and progress-monitoring tools
- Modifiable activities and accommodations to support all learners
- Available for grades 7-12, 18+, and college programs

> "**We had <u>measurable</u> student outcomes because the Ori modules were able to simulate real-world experiences. Those modules continue to carry through beyond the pandemic.**"
>
> – Dan Cullen
> Regional Supervisor of Special Education
> Colonial Intermediate Unit

The Results

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Overall, Ori helped Colonial Institute achieve:

- Increased engagement among students
- Increased connection between educators and students
- Connectivity back to PA Code Chapter 339
- College and post-graduate preparedness curriculum for students

Flexible teaching modes

The front-of-class mode allows teachers to lead instruction in a whole group or in a small group setting. A self-paced mode allows students to learn at their own pace in any location. Live participation mode lets teachers guide students through an interactive experience as they engage with the learning on their own devices.

Translation and accommodations
- Text and audio translation to 60+ languages
- Text-to-speech
- Speech-to-text
- Voice recorded responses
- Enlarged Text

Assessments

Teachers have access to formative and summative assessments for both pre-and post-course assessments. In addition, a variety of activity types support Universal Design Learning (UDL) strategies, such as multiple-choice, matching, sorting, short answer, paragraphs, and more.

Advanced data reporting

Access comprehensive data reporting with class grade books, detailed student reports, and district and school dashboards. Educators can also review student answers, provide feedback in real-time, and assign retakes.

Personalized support and training

Ori provides dedicated customer success managers with education and classroom experience, lesson scope, and pacing guidance, and both live and asynchronous training and support can be tailored to individual learning models.