



SUCCESS STORY



VIGO COUNTY SCHOOL CORPORATION

Location:

Terre Haute, IN

Program Enrollment:

100 students per year

Success Metrics:

- Gateway credential for students in business, marketing, or information technology career pathways
- High school students earn dual college credit
- Industry certification helps students win jobs and higher wages



Indiana Schools Validate Entry Level Computer Skills with IC3 Certification

In 2018 the state of Indiana signed a computer science bill (172) into law, requiring every public school in grades K-12 to include computer science in their curriculum beginning in 2021. The bill also established a grant program and fund to support computer science-focused professional development for K-12 teachers.

Upon the passing of the bill, Indiana Governor Eric Holcomb said, "We know that computer science skills are in high demand for today's jobs - and they will be critical for future generations. That's why this bill is so important. Making sure every Indiana school offers computer science aligns our workforce need with educational opportunities."

The Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) agreed, stating, "IDOE feels strongly about providing every student in Indiana with the opportunity to learn computer science, as this is as an increasingly necessary step in preparing students to be productive citizens in an ever-changing, technology-driven world."

WHAT IS IC3?

Certiport's IC3 Digital Literacy Certification aims to validate foundational digital literacy skills, and many schools in Indiana are adopting IC3 as a baseline for their students and to satisfy the State of Indiana requirements.

IC3 is based on a global standard and is comprised of three exams: Computing Fundamentals, Living Online, and Key Applications. Since IC3 includes concepts and skills that apply to almost any school or career pathway, it's an ideal solution for any school looking to validate student's basic digital skills. Many students who earn IC3 go on to earn additional certifications and are set on a path to computer science success.

The National Coalition of Certification Centers (NC3) is a large training provider who helps students get jobs in skilled areas such as diesel mechanics or HVAC services. They endorse IC3 because they know that digital literacy skills are foundational to future success – no matter what the industry.

Indiana School District Gets Students College and Career Ready with IC3

Many schools in Indiana have sought out certification programs to train their students in digital literacy and validate their skills – even before the new law. Back in 2012 for example, Vigo County School Corporation saw a need and gathered business, marketing and information technology teachers with administrators and industry partners to review the certification options that would provide a good technology baseline for students entering college or the workforce. They determined the IC3 Digital Literacy certification program was the best fit for the community.

“We selected IC3 because it is vendor neutral and targets three key areas - hardware, software, and the Internet - instead of only focusing on software,” said Doug Dillion, CTE Director, Vigo County School Corporation.

Dillion was instrumental in getting IC3 added to the state-approved list and bringing it to Vigo County School Corporation. First it was adopted by the adult workforce development system and then at the secondary school level.

“Initially we focused on certifying our teachers,” said Dillion. “Then we started to implement the IC3 model in a course called IT Essentials while working to get the credential on the WorkIN training list.”

The IT Essentials course is now called Digital Applications and Responsibility, and Becky Bendickson teaches the course at Terre Haute North Vigo High School. “I think IC3 is very beneficial to students, I’ve had two prior students tell me they were hired for jobs in college thanks to the certification. All of my students take the IC3 exam and once students begin to see some students passing the certification, others are more encouraged.”

Liz Kaufmann, business teacher and Department Chair at Terre Haute North Vigo High School, agrees. “I was thrilled to be able to offer students a credential to work toward when we first brought IC3 to our schools. Digital Applications and Responsibility is typically a freshman class so they can’t always see into their future, but we can. We know an industry credential will help them win jobs and we’ve seen students earning higher wages thanks to the certification as well.”

IC3 is typically the gateway credential for students in the business, marketing or information technology career pathways at Vigo County Schools. Students who take the Digital Applications and Responsibility course and earn IC3 certification also receive dual college credit at Ivy Tech College in Indiana.

“We want every student that completes one of our BMIT pathways to have this level of general computer skills,” said Dillion. “We believe this is why our post-secondary partners provide dual college credit for this credential and why it is valuable when a student walks into an interview. IC3 shows what a student knows and can do on a computer.”

Dillion says the title of the course has changed over the years but some things have held true: “Students who earn the IC3 credential are eligible for dual college credit, the credential provides them with a third-party validation to prove computer competence, and the skills of students and adults who earn IC3 are far superior to the average person which saves the industry time and money.”

Dillion got IC3 adopted at four schools in Vigo County, including Terre Haute North Vigo High School. Since 2012 the number of IC3 certifications has varied from more than 60 people earning



all three parts of IC3 certification in its first year to more than 115 in subsequent years.

The schools have become very competitive with each other – the teachers have an ongoing competition similar to the school sports teams. There is a traveling trophy and the course with the most IC3 certifications keeps the trophy for the year – which has been Bendickson for several years.

“I think the real success of this program has been due to the teacher’s efforts to help students see that industry certifications are so very important and will look very good on a job resume,” said Bendickson. “Also, we have seen it help students get jobs over candidates who do not have certifications.”

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