

## Continuing Education Academy

Tolleson Union High School District  
Tolleson, AZ

*"Two things are exceedingly important to our program: the academic curriculum and the alignment with state essential skills. The flexibility that we have in our learning environment allows students access to curriculum at any time. I've seen other programs, and the quality of the curriculum and the flexibility of NovaNET far outweighs them."*

—Jim Green, Program Director

### School/District Profile

Continuing Education Academy (CEA) is located in Tolleson, a suburb of Phoenix, Arizona. CEA enrolls 281 students in grades nine to 12 from Tolleson High School and Westview High School. Ninety-four are part-time students and 187 are full-time students. Enrollment for the Tolleson Union High School District (TUHSD) is 4,704, with students coming from a variety of demographic backgrounds: Hispanic, Caucasian, Native American and African American.

### Challenges

CEA enrolls students who face significant life challenges and special circumstances prohibiting attendance in a traditional school. According to Dr. Ann Stover, instructor at CEA, "Our main difficulty is keeping students in school and on track to graduate. Many are behind in credits because they don't attend school due to working jobs for 40 hours or more, living on their own, parenting, or just released from prison." Dr. Flores, Superintendent of TUSHD agrees, "Our graduation rate in 1995 was 53 percent in Tolleson Union School District, and we needed to implement a program to help students stay on track to graduate and get their education."

### Solution

NovaNET comprehensive courseware from Pearson Digital Learning helped CEA serve more students with more subjects. According to Dr. Stover, "Implementing NovaNET opened up a world of possibilities. In the first two years of our school, we only had textbooks. We could only serve freshmen and sophomores in their core subjects. When we added NovaNET, we went from a two- to a four-year program and were able to add electives and advanced coursework that were never before available to junior and senior level students."

NovaNET's self-paced curriculum engages students and offers immediate feedback, allowing them to monitor their own progress. As a result, students have more flexibility, more self-determination, and more motivation to reach their designated goal—to earn more credits toward graduation.

CEA educators receive technology training in the use of NovaNET, including instruction on building and editing curriculum. Each staff member reviews NovaNET curriculum, gathers available instructional tools and develops supplemental lessons or materials to give students the best learning environment possible. In addition to managing curriculum, the staff maintains pertinent individual student records on the NovaNET system. They monitor student reports, usage summaries, and performance using the NovaNET system's management tools.

### Results

Tolleson Union School District graduation numbers have risen 15 percent since CEA implemented NovaNET in the district in 1995. 2001 graduation numbers are at 68.3% and are projected to reach 70.7% for the 2002 school year. During the 2000-01 school year, CEA served 438 TUHSD students, earning 338.5 individual credits overall. "We've gone from 15 to 300 students in just five years. In January 2002, we're expecting to help 200 to 300 seniors get the credits they need to graduate," says Dr. Stover. "By June 2002 we'll have 600 students using NovaNET. As the scope of our program expands, we look forward to helping more and more students continue to succeed."