



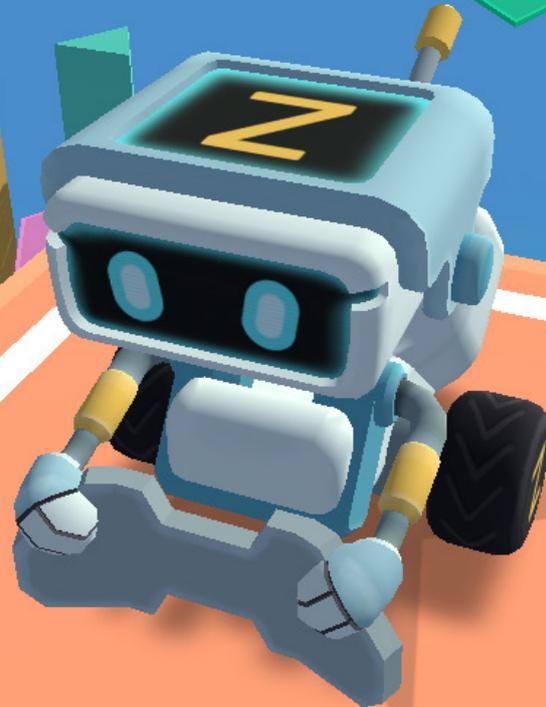
CoderZ™

CASE STUDY

# KNOWLEDGE IS POWER PROGRAM



**LaGrange Highlands Middle School**  
*District 106*



## Overview

- LaGrange Highlands Middle School needed a virtual way to teach coding, robotics, and drone development.
- When COVID sent students home to learn, it adopted the CoderZ platform.
- 75% of the school's STEM students signed up for CoderZ as soon as it was available.
- The platform helps beginning coders gain confidence and advanced coders reach for the stars.



## Giving Students a Coding Program to Run With

Knowing just how valuable STEM learning is for today's students, Matthew Yena is a health teacher who also teaches several different STEM elective courses to LaGrange Highlands School District 106's middle school students (grades 5-8). Onboard with the idea, the school started using Project Lead the Way, a STEM curriculum developed in Indianapolis.

"Our STEM program has evolved over time. We started doing some general introduction to engineering classes and then we brought robotics into classes," said Yena. "Now we're teaching drone curriculum through a different program."



## Working from Home

When COVID-19 sent students, teachers, and staff members home in the spring of 2020, Yena was tasked with teaching the drone and robotics curriculums remotely. It was a big ask, considering Yena couldn't just put together a bunch of robotics kits and send them out to the students.

"They didn't have any experience with any of the robotics material," he explained. Working with Mr. Mike Paperski, his school principal, Yena discovered the CoderZ robotics and coding platform. "I checked it out and he checked it out, and next thing you know, we were on a call with CoderZ, talking through it and rolling out the platform."

Right out of the gate, 99% of the students taking STEM classes signed up for CoderZ. While teaching remotely, Yena worked through the Cyber Robotics 101 and 102 courses with his 7th and 8th grade STEM classes.

"The kids really enjoyed it," said Yena, who doesn't see his STEM students every day of the week. "On week one, I introduced them to CoderZ and asked them to get to a specific point in the program by the end of the week. Some kids just took off and ran with it."

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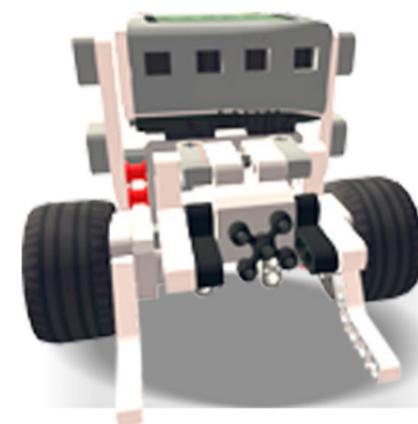
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## Ease of Use for Students & Teachers

Yena credits the CoderZ's interface with making engagement easy and interesting for his classes. It also easy for teachers to use. He likes the way it pushes beginners to achieve their early coding goals while also encouraging more advanced coders to move the goalposts and achieve even more.

This differentiated learning helps teachers reach a broader pool of students, many of whom may not have naturally gravitated to STEM subjects. Finally, Yena also likes how CoderZ serves as an extension of his classroom—be it in-person, remote, hybrid, or independent instruction.

"We have some students who are constantly looking to challenge themselves outside the walls of the classroom," said Yena. "When they were at home and looking for something to do, CoderZ helped to fill that gap."



# It's a No-Brainer

Being able to offer computer coding and robotics helps LaGrange Highlands Middle School provide a valuable life skill to students who are in the early stages of choosing and/or working toward their advanced educational and career goals. The platform also helps students improve their computational and collaboration skills, both of which are critical in the modern workplace.

"With coding, you just have to learn that there are so many solutions, and so many opportunities to come

to a solution in different ways," said Yena. "CoderZ, and coding in general, gives students the ability to figure it out on their own."

Speaking to other schools that are looking for a coding curriculum, Yena said the accountability and assessment that CoderZ provides—plus the high level of student engagement that it drives—make it an easy choice. "Given the opportunity to use CoderZ in a classroom setting," he added, "using it as an educational benefit would be a no-brainer."

## About LaGrange Highlands Middle School

