illuminate education

Playbook for Data-Driven Decision Making

Strategies for leveraging data to drive whole child supports, system-level improvements, and accelerated learning for all.

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Introduction

DR. AMY JACKSON

> "That's at the core of equity: understanding who your kids are and how to meet their needs. You are still focused on outcomes, but the path to get there may not be the same for each one."
>
> Pedro Noguera

Educators are trained to seek understanding. With any program or strategy, they ask *Why?* and *How?* and *When will I know if it's effective?*

And even though assessment and data-based decision making have long been considered foundational elements of teaching and learning, educators continue to ask those questions because our understanding of them is ever-evolving.

Today, for example, we hear about "whole child data systems" and frameworks like a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS). Why are we so focused on these? Why do most states now have a framework in place and most districts across the country dedicate time and resources toward them?

There are many reasons why, but in the most simple sense, whole child systems like MTSS can connect and reinforce the best practices that support system-level improvement and drive academic growth and social-emotional well-being for *each and every student*.

While certain terminology and elements may vary, all tiered support models function as systemic continuous improvement frameworks focused on proactively identifying and addressing individual student needs. Strong core, Tier 1 instruction is accessible to all students. Meaningful collaboration between educators, administrators, parents, and community members wraps around and strengthens practices. Evidence-based strategies come together within a layered continuum of supports.

And perhaps most importantly, data drives decision making.

It's for this reason that comprehensive assessment is also an essential component of whole child systems and MTSS.

A purposeful balance of academic and social-emotional behavior (SEB) assessments—screening, diagnostic assessment, and progress monitoring, combined with formative processes and intentional summative assessment—yields the critical insights educators need to make decisions and advance equity.

According to the National Center on Intensive Intervention, assessment and intervention are inextricably connected. The right assessments provide an objective way for educators to identify a student's needs, plan instruction, determine if and when supports need to be intensified, and equitably allocate resources.

While many educators have already grounded themselves in the *why* behind whole child systems and MTSS, the *how* can be more elusive. Data are often stuck in silos, collaboration can be stifled by disjointed processes, and assessment systems prove to be insufficient.

We created this playbook to shed light on how the right tools and materials can come together to solve these challenges of *how*. We spotlight the incredible work of several Illuminate schools and districts and how they use Illuminate's solutions and services to understand students' academic and SEB needs, target instruction and intervention, build and sustain system-level structures, promote equity in opportunities and outcomes, and deepen assessment and data literacy through embedded professional learning. We also share ways that some districts combine multiple solutions to overcome some of the greatest challenges our schools face today.

The Illuminate Solution was built to overcome the challenges educators face in the how of MTSS so that we can realize the why: the potential to meet the needs of each student in order to accelerate equitable growth for all. Whether you're a current Illuminate district looking for new ideas and strategies or you're not yet part of the Illuminate family, we hope that these stories and strategies from districts across the country will help you see how this goal can become a reality in your district, too.

Dr. Amy Jackson
Vice President, Applied Research & Strategy
Illuminate Education

Tips for Using the Playbook:
Connecting These Strategies to Your District's Needs

This playbook is filled with strategies for using Illuminate's products and services to overcome common challenges in schools, implement for success, guide data-driven decisions that support students and improve systems, and eliminate laborious processes that take critical time away from teaching and learning.

But how can you apply these strategies to your own unique district or building?

After reading an article, use the following reflection questions to help process the ideas presented by your colleagues and connect them to the current needs and opportunities in your own district.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

1. What were the problems or challenges the district was working to address? Are you currently grappling with a similar challenge in your own organization?
2. How would you summarize the way Illuminate is being used to support the district's needs?
3. How are the practices highlighted in the article similar to your own district's practices? How are they different?
4. What is one practice, strategy, or feature you want to learn more about or implement with your own team?
5. Do you have any follow-up questions for your Customer Success Manager (CSM)? If so, what are they?

Section 1: The Illuminate Solution

DnA + FastBridge + eduCLIMBER + Achievement Dashboard

The Illuminate Solution combines comprehensive assessment, MTSS collaboration and management, and real-time dashboard tools to help educators accelerate growth and advance equity with whole child data and actionable insights.

DnA, FastBridge, eduCLIMBER, and Achievement Dashboard can be used separately, but they are even more powerful together.

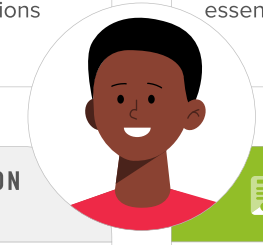
THE ILLUMINATE SOLUTION

FastBridge — SCREENING AND PROGRESS MONITORING

Research-based universal screening and progress monitoring for academics and social-emotional behavior (SEB) with intervention recommendations

eduCLIMBER — MTSS COLLABORATION AND MANAGEMENT

Whole child data visualization and MTSS collaboration and management platform with built-in tools for essential MTSS practices



DnA & Inspect — ASSESSMENT CREATION AND ADMINISTRATION

Highest-quality, standards-based assessments with instant scoring, formative feedback, interactive reporting, and targeted activities

Achievement Dashboard — REAL-TIME DASHBOARDS

Data visualizations that enable administrators to view key data, monitor initiatives via an equity lens, and share information with all stakeholders

Learn More About The Illuminate Solution

Oxford Community Schools

Drive system-level improvements and meet whole child needs with comprehensive assessment, MTSS collaboration and management, and real-time dashboards

Oxford Community Schools

Located approximately 40 miles northwest of Detroit, Oxford Community Schools serves over 7,000 students across 85 square miles in North Oakland County. While approximately 25% of Oxford's student population is economically disadvantaged and 10% of learners are enrolled in special education, the district's graduation rate is over 92%. Oxford is the only K-12 International Baccalaureate (IB) school district in Michigan.

Oxford's leadership team is guided by their Strategic Alignment work, a roadmap of comprehensive goal setting and planning to realize Oxford's mission: providing an education that challenges all students to achieve their maximum potential in academics, arts, and athletics and prepares them to succeed in a global society. The Strategic Alignment work has also informed the creation of two other milestone accomplishments: (1) articulating the district's Portrait of a Graduate and (2) developing the district's Strategic Plan, a set of three main areas of focus—Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment; Organizational Culture; and School Culture—with strategic goals and timeframes tied to each.

In the eyes of the Oxford leadership team, if an initiative doesn't align with their strategic work, it doesn't align with what's best for Oxford Community Schools' students. "It's important that we're in a constant reflective state, ensuring our actions and our priorities are aligned with our Strategic Plan," says Anita Qonja-Collins, Assistant Superintendent of Elementary Education. "It's equally important to ensure that our resources, finances, and time investments align around the Strategic Plan to ensure our goals are being met."

LOCATION

Oxford, MI

NUMBERS

Students: 7,105

Schools: 10

Teachers: 370

The Challenge

Oxford Community Schools leverages a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) to drive decisions around continuous improvement, district-level resourcing and professional development, and instruction and intervention for schools, grades, and individual students. To support this work and continually move their processes forward, they needed a suite of tools that would, in the words of Superintendent Tim Throne, beget "highly informed teachers without a high level of effort."

- Oxford needed valid and reliable assessment tools to understand students' strengths and needs—not only in math and reading, but also in social-emotional behavior. Ken Weaver, Deputy Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction, shares that having data beyond academics is key to ensuring each student succeeds. "As educators, we still have the same job that has always been there: to educate students to the best of our ability," explains Weaver. "But in our schools today, we really need to address the needs of the whole child."

- The district's leadership team also needed visibility into how their overall MTSS was truly being implemented at the systems-level in order to drive adjustments and resource allocation for continued improvement. Dr. Christine Russell, MTSS Coordinator for the district, shares that this is just as important as having deep insights into individual student needs. "We need to make sure that we have data that helps us look at grade-level and school-level success," says Russell. "That way, we can align our resources across all the needs of all of our students."

- At the student level, teams were also struggling to track interventions and intervention fidelity, and to connect that information to progress monitoring data in order to determine intervention effectiveness.

- Finally, the team was grappling with how to make the wealth of available student data tangible and actionable for teachers. "It was hard to paint a picture for teachers and building principals around what the data actually said and how to really use them," recalls Weaver. "We needed visualizations that could help teachers understand and quickly make decisions based on data."

> "We need to make sure that we have data that helps us look at grade-level and school-level success. That way, we can align our resources across all the needs of all of our students."
>
> Dr. Christine Russell,
> District MTSS Coordinator

Supporting MTSS with the Illuminate Solution

Today, the district leverages the Illuminate Solution to support their data-driven decision making and MTSS.

FastBridge is used to conduct universal screening three times per year in the areas of reading, math, and social-emotional behavior (SEB). FastBridge also provides progress monitoring, which enables the team to monitor and evaluate intervention effectiveness.

DnA supports other components of Oxford's assessment system, including locally-developed assessments and unit tests, and accommodates direct data entry by teachers. The leadership team also links to the district's detailed assessment calendar, providing assessment windows, data entry due dates, and context around the purpose of each assessment.

eduCLIMBER then serves as a central hub for both data visualizations and facilitating key MTSS processes—such as tracking interventions, recording and aggregating intervention fidelity, and collaborating in teams for problem-solving. **Importantly, data from both FastBridge (academic and SEB) and DnA are brought into eduCLIMBER, so that teachers are able to analyze data from those assessment components in the context of the greater, whole child data picture.** The suite of teacher-friendly data visualizations helps educators understand individual student and group needs to help guide both instruction and intervention.

"We see eduCLIMBER as a place where teachers can begin their deep problem-solving, where everything comes together with beautiful data visualizations," explains Russell. "Teachers can make decisions with everything in one spot about who is right for intervention and ensure students get what they need academically and behaviorally."

Combined, FastBridge and DnA provide the Oxford team with a valid and reliable data foundation to the holistic whole child data picture. It also gives a more complete picture of student learning by combining assessments for both standards and specific skills underpinning standards. Addressing academic and SEB skill gaps can help clear the path to standards mastery.

IMPLEMENTATION TIP

When used together—and with the Oxford leadership team's dedication to a cohesive and intentional implementation—the combined solutions are greater than the sum of their individual parts.

Finally, Achievement Dashboard provides visualizations depicting progress around key initiatives that can be shared publicly to support both transparency and engagement with the community.

When used together—and with the Oxford leadership team's dedication to a cohesive and intentional implementation—the combined solutions are greater than the sum of their individual parts.

For instance, FastBridge provides data that are fundamental to decision making for both Tier 1 supports and Tier 2 or Tier 3 interventions. Yet those key data are only a few pieces of the puzzle—and teachers need the whole picture to engage in deep problem-solving. With eduCLIMBER, Oxford teachers have a single location to examine FastBridge data alongside other current and historic data, including additional assessments, intervention records, and attendance data, with visualizations that make the data make sense.

Removing Barriers and Enhancing MTSS

Beyond providing a single hub of information, Oxford also uses eduCLIMBER's built-in tools to support their established data team structures by simplifying laborious processes, streamlining documentation, and easing some of the logistical challenges of collaboration.

The Oxford team leverages eduCLIMBER as a workflow and collaboration platform. Data are the foundation, but the built-in tools help them bring those data into their daily work and continuous improvement processes.

Today, the team uses eduCLIMBER to:

- **Analyze and strengthen Tier 1.** "In Oxford, we conceptualize MTSS as a funnel, and we need to continually look at the work we do at that top part of the funnel and make sure we're catching as many students as possible with effective Tier 1 practices," explains Russell. "When we use eduCLIMBER to look deeply into our data, we can see if there are gaps in what we're doing at Tier 1 and fill those gaps, whether by providing professional development for teachers, or looking for a supplemental piece to add, or going deeper into a particular part of the curriculum so that we don't need to move to intervention as quickly."

- **Tracking interventions and intervention effectiveness. FastBridge progress monitoring data are brought into eduCLIMBER, and interventionists also log in each day to record intervention implementation and fidelity details. Having both progress monitoring and intervention records in one place has transformed conversations in MTSS meetings about individual students, as well as larger program questions. "We're able to look at our interventions and determine whether or not they're being done with fidelity. We're also able to complete program evaluations—determining whether our interventions are effective overall," shares Weaver. Russell adds that having intervention data in eduCLIMBER also streamlines communication between teachers and interventionists, which can otherwise be tricky to accomplish with the competing demands of the day.**

IMPLEMENTATION TIP

- **Streamlining problem-solving meetings. The central office team meets regularly to analyze and problem-solve around curriculum, professional development, and staff supports. "It's been helpful having one spot where all those discussions are tracked and where we keep the notes from meetings," affirms Russell. "Whether we're discussing classroom-level data or an individual student, we can quickly bring up notes so that we're not repeating information but rather starting where we left off and moving the dial forward."**

- **Managing student plans**. Michigan requires districts to write a reading intervention plan for any student who scores below benchmark in reading, and the team uses eduCLIMBER's smartFORMs to develop those plans. "eduCLIMBER keeps all students' critical reading data in one spot. With this information, we can create plans detailing additional services for our struggling readers—whether through enhanced classroom supports or possibly time with an interventionist," explains Russell.

- **Increasing family engagement.** The student plans include family-friendly graphs pulled from eduCLIMBER. "Parents and guardians are able to see the progress their students have made over the course of the last few years," says Russell. "They can see and understand whether things are going well or if there is a need for additional support."

IMPLEMENTATION TIP

Weaver reflects that Illuminate has played a multifaceted role in supporting and streamlining the district's MTSS implementation, especially with multiple solutions working in tandem. "It has really changed how we approach MTSS overall throughout the district," he shares, "and all of the products have had a hand in that."

> "We're able to look at our interventions and determine whether or not they're being done with fidelity. We're also able to complete program evaluations—determining whether our interventions are effective overall."
>
> Ken Weaver,
> Deputy Superintendent of
> Curriculum and Instruction

Watch the Oxford Community Schools Spotlight Webinar

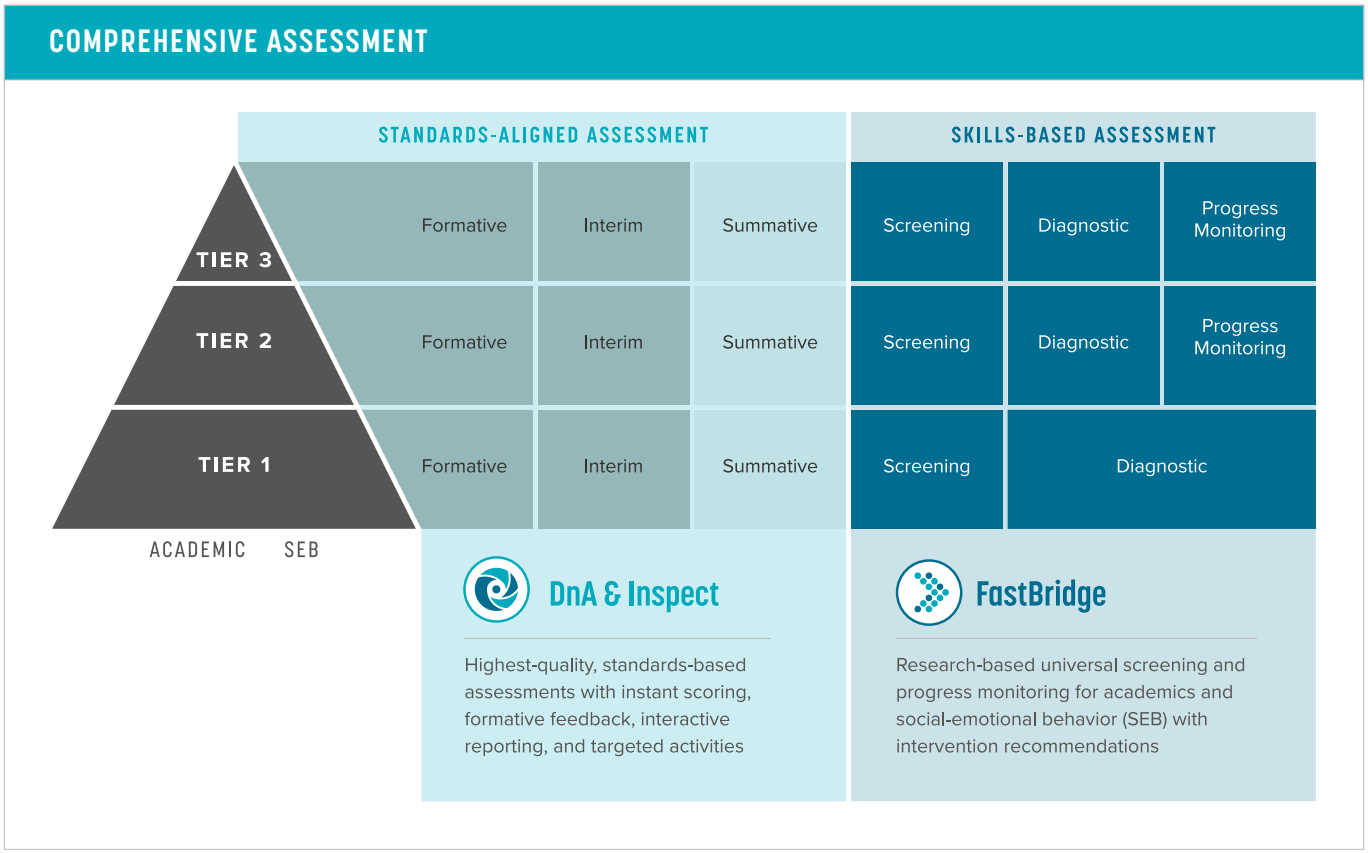
Oxford Community Schools uses DnA, FastBridge, eduCLIMBER, Achievement Dashboard, and Consultative Services to support learning. **To learn more about the Illuminate Solution, reach out today.**

Section 2: Comprehensive Assessment

DnA + FastBridge

Illuminate provides a complete set of standards and skills-based assessment tools to understand each student's academic and social-emotional behavior (SEB) learning and needs.

FastBridge and DnA with Inspect can be used separately. When combined, they are even more powerful.



Learn More About Illuminate's Comprehensive Assessment Solution

Garden City Public Schools

Create a valid and reliable comprehensive assessment system

About Garden City Public Schools

The Garden City United School District is home to a vibrant community of over 7,400 students across 11 elementary schools. Garden City Public School's growing immigrant population features a unique blend of students from Hispanic, southeast Asian, and other minority group backgrounds, and is known as one of the most ethnically-diverse communities in the state.

The district envisions the ability to improve student outcomes by setting high expectations for all students through a strong, student-centered data culture. Garden City's leadership feels that high-quality data must live in the classroom, and that a teacher's ability to quickly and accurately plan differentiation, address misconceptions, and pinpoint needs directly translates into student success. Leadership feels that quality assessment is purposeful assessment; if it won't yield data worth using, it's not worth administering.

LOCATION

Garden City, KS

NUMBERS

Students:	7,433
Staff:	626
Schools:	18

The Challenge

In 2017, the district was struggling to realize its vision of a valid, reliable assessment system that provided meaningful information and easy-to-use reports for teachers. School leaders at Garden City Unified were tasked with developing an extensive plan for a district-wide assessment system. This project would entail assembling various components around data and assessment to deliver quality information to stakeholders.

As a part of this work, the faculty and staff knew they'd also need to overcome barriers preventing them from taking action based on their assessment data. "We needed one location to collect and store the different data we have gathered on students. Assessment data were being collected and stored in various formats around the district which made it very difficult for those data to be easily accessed when needed," said Crystal Steinmetz, Director of Curriculum and Assessment. "It was also very difficult to aggregate and analyze multiple pieces of data since it was not being collected in the same place." This created frustration in PLCs and staff meetings, in which teachers were struggling to engage in any meaningful discussions around the results.

Their team set out on a mission to discover a solution that would bridge the gap between assessment and action. Their requirements for the platform included:

- Creation and administration for their standards-aligned common assessments
- Ability to collect, store, and manage assessment data in one place
- Permissions for various roles and site levels, allowing staff members to view only relevant data
- Creating and customizing reports for focused, data-driven conversations

After evaluating several options, the Garden City team selected DnA, a standards-based assessment creation and administration platform, along with the Inspect item bank to address its data needs.

> "We had been looking for a way to create common assessments and then have meaningful conversations around these assessments."
>
> Crystal Steinmetz,
> Director of Curriculum
> and Assessment

Using DnA to Make Data Actionable for Teachers

Within the first couple months of implementation, district leaders and staff were absorbing all the uses and features of their new platform. With guidance from instructional coaches and building lead teachers, teachers were trained on tasks ranging from administering common assessments to creating and customizing their own reports. The benefits were immediately felt.

“We had been looking for a way to create common assessments and then have meaningful conversations around these assessments,” said Steinmetz. Their newfound ability to provide common assessments via DnA began empowering collective conversations about student performance, both at the classroom and building levels.

The team developed several custom reports for knowledge gathering and sharing via the Business Intelligence (BI) Tool available in DnA. The reports serve as a weekly or biweekly newsletter that act as a launching pad for deeper conversations around data. “By building specific DnA reports, we are able to create a resource that can be used for data conversations,” said Steinmetz. “These reports help guide reflection within our collaborative group meetings and direct conversations around how to most effectively support students.”

IMPLEMENTATION TIP

Standards-based common assessments give Garden City educators meaningful data around student learning, designed to align with the district’s scope and sequence. Custom BI Tool reports present the data in way that answers their key questions and supports further analysis.

Adding FastBridge to Create a Valid and Reliable Comprehensive Assessment System

After the first year of implementation, the Garden City team looked for a solution to further complete their district-wide comprehensive assessment system. The team decided their next step was to adopt FastBridge, which provides research-based universal screening, diagnostic, and progress monitoring assessments. It also features the ability to monitor social-emotional behavior (SEB), “which we haven’t found elsewhere, or at least not in the capacity where you can examine data at the building or district-wide level,” added Steinmetz.

In particular, the computer-adaptive tests (CAT) serve as an integral piece for their ability to measure student learning. Adaptive assessments adjust based on the correctness of a student’s previous response, in order to better measure the student’s skill mastery. FastBridge’s CATs are valid yet brief. This was an important aspect, as students had frequently timed out on the district’s previous screener and yielded results that teachers didn’t trust. “FastBridge eliminates the timing out factor, but it also adjusts the level of the questions presented based on the student’s responses. We are able to get a better overall picture of the student,” said Steinmetz.

By combining DnA and FastBridge, Garden City gets the best of both worlds: standards-based common assessments tailored to their needs and screening and progress monitoring tools to fuel their MTSS. Plus, they gain assessment tools for both academics and SEB.

FastBridge has also proven to be an important tool in the district's multi-tier system of support (MTSS) implementation, which is guided by annual recommendations from the Kansas Technical Assistance System Network (TASN).

In 2019, TASN released updated best practice recommendations regarding the usage of data to identify students in need of intervention. Steinmetz and her team were delighted to find that FastBridge was already tightly aligned to those recommended best practices. "It was exciting because it confirmed that we had chosen the right assessment tool. FastBridge reporting aligns with newly released research and recommendations from our state department of education."

What is a comprehensive assessment system? Download our infographic to learn more.

Read the Full Garden City Public Schools Case Study

Garden City Public Schools uses DnA, Inspect, FastBridge, eduCLIMBER, and Consultative Services to support learning. **To learn more about the Illuminate Solution, reach out today.**

Westside Community Schools

Use assessment data and professional learning communities to improve both core instruction and intervention

About Westside Community Schools

Westside District 66's mission is to ensure academic excellence and serve the unique needs of all learners. The district does this by using student assessment data to improve instruction, while also personalizing learning for every student.

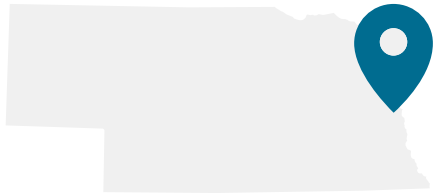
In the Westside schools, every K-12 student gets his or her own Apple device for learning. In addition, students are supported by outstanding faculty; 11 employees have received state or national awards. Although a third of students qualify for free or reduced lunch and there are 20 different languages spoken in the district, 82% of all kindergarteners and first-grade students were proficient in reading as of the 2019-20 school year—and 80% of 2020 graduates are attending college.

LOCATION

Omaha, NE

NUMBERS

Students:	6,095
Staff:	976
Schools:	14



Disrupting the Paradigm

In analyzing student achievement data from the 2013-14 school year, district officials realized that for most students in grades K-6, how they entered at the beginning of the year was how they left at the end. Specifically, district leaders noticed their most struggling students still weren't making gains in reading.

For instance, the percentage of students receiving targeted intervention in kindergarten letter sound fluency barely moved from fall to spring that year, and actually increased by two percentage points: 30% in the fall versus 32% in the spring.

"It was very predictable, and we needed to do something different," says Dr. Greg Betts, Director of Elementary Teaching and Learning.

District leaders recognized that all the intervention they could provide wouldn't matter unless core instruction also improved. In addition, teachers needed more support in understanding how to use data to improve their teaching. "With the best of intentions, we spent a lot of time and training on interventions—but we started to drift away from the importance of core instruction for all students," said Betts. "Intervening from the top was not the only answer."

Improving Core Instruction

Westside committed to enhancing core instruction. District leaders used curriculum maps to clearly define the skills that students should learn at each grade level. They also reevaluated the core curriculum they were using and drew upon the work of Dr. Anita Archer to enhance whole-group learning.

> "We had gotten our instructional systems in place in terms of what we should teach, and now we needed to ensure that our assessment systems were set up to measure effectiveness."
>
> Karin Mussman,
> MTSS Coordinator

Westside had tightened up its core instruction, and leaders had the data at the kindergarten level to prove that this new approach was working: By the 2017-18 school year, the district was able to reduce the percentage of students who needed intervention in letter sound fluency from 33% in the fall to just 7% in the spring. Now, what the district needed was consistent application across all K-6 classrooms, integrated with its multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) practices.

"We had gotten our instructional systems in place in terms of what we should teach, and now we needed to ensure that our assessment systems were set up to measure effectiveness," says MTSS Coordinator Karin Mussman. After looking at various products, district leaders chose FastBridge for this task.

Westside began using FastBridge during the 2018-19 school year. "After our first year, we had more teachers using the system and administering assessments than we ever had with our prior assessment system," Mussman says. Even so, the district still had minimal input from teachers during MTSS meetings, suggesting they might not be leveraging the data as effectively as they could be.

To help teachers use student data to better inform their instruction, Westside developed FAST PLCs. "We wanted teachers to become self-sufficient with data-based decision making and increase their voice in MTSS meetings," Mussman explains.

FAST PLCs Unlock Data-Driven Decisions in Each Classroom

Westside's new FAST PLCs are scheduled on the early release Wednesdays that are set aside for teacher professional learning once a month. During the FAST PLC meetings, teachers meet in grade-level teams to dig into the FastBridge assessment data and reflect on what they can do to strengthen outcomes for all students. Then, they set or review progress toward their goals for improving whole-group instruction. Finally, they choose proven instructional strategies they can use to achieve their goals from a list of research-based strategies the district provides—and they create an action plan based on these strategies.

These are always scheduled for the week before the district's MTSS meetings, in which student intervention decisions are made. "This gives teachers time to dig into the data and reflect and plan for what they're going to do to support all students," Mussman says. "It also gives teachers more ownership in the decisions being made, and they ultimately become more engaged participants in the MTSS meetings—which is critical for effective problem solving."

IMPLEMENTATION TIP

Scheduling their FAST PLCs before their MTSS meetings helps re-emphasize the district's focus on taking action at Tier 1 before turning to interventions.

To guide this PLC work, “we focus on just one FastBridge report at a time, so that teachers can really go deeper and understand what each report tells us,” Mussman says. “We have planned out which report is most relevant at various points in the year.” For instance, in August, teachers review the Group Screening Report to get an overall picture of where students are at the beginning of the year. In October, they dig into the Individual Benchmark Report and how to interpret it, which is shared with parents at fall conferences.

This PLC work leads naturally into the MTSS meetings, where teachers then strategize about how they’ll meet the needs of individual students who are still struggling.

Get a quick refresher on key FastBridge reports here.

Combining FastBridge with eduCLIMBER

In addition to FastBridge data showing specific skills gaps, Westside educators also have access to a more holistic view of each student with eduCLIMBER, an MTSS collaboration and management solution. eduCLIMBER combines assessment, social-emotional behavior (SEB), attendance, and other whole child data in a single platform.

Teachers use eduCLIMBER to examine FastBridge assessment data alongside other whole child data to inform decisions in their MTSS meetings. With eduCLIMBER, they can explore the relationships between multiple factors to get a complete view of why a particular student might continue to struggle.

Once an intervention decision is made, educators also use FastBridge’s progress monitoring assessments to determine whether an intervention is working and if it’s working fast enough.

FastBridge and eduCLIMBER are used in tandem for intervention success. FastBridge provides screening data to reveal which students may need an intervention, and eduCLIMBER helps teams better understand the true nature of the need. With an intervention in place, FastBridge progress monitoring tools measure the intervention’s effectiveness.

Achieving Promising Results

By pairing eduCLIMBER-supported MTSS meetings with their FAST PLCs, Westside educators are improving both intervention and core instruction. “We have put greater focus on core instruction as the foundational element to an effective MTSS,” Mussman says, “and we’ve seen promising results.”

Not only was student achievement on track for becoming the best that Westside had ever seen before the pandemic emerged, but the district has also realized gains in teachers’ skills at using data to drive instruction.

In a survey given at the start of the school year and again at the end, teachers indicated improvements in all areas measured. The percentage of teachers who said they use the FastBridge system for progress monitoring jumped nearly 20%, as more teachers are using the system's rapid progress monitoring tools either weekly or every other week to track the effectiveness of interventions.

In addition, more teachers are creating instructional groups using FastBridge assessments and planning their instruction using student data outcomes.

"We are not leaving [achievement] to chance for students," Betts concludes. "We want every student who leaves the Westside Community Schools to be a successful, lifelong learner."

Read the Full Westside Community Schools Case Study

Westside Community Schools uses DnA, Inspect, FastBridge, eduCLIMBER, and Consultative Services to support learning. **To learn more about the Illuminate Solution, reach out today.**

Boston Public Schools

Improve teaching and learning with formative assessment

About Boston Public Schools

Boston Public Schools (BPS), the birthplace of public education in the United States, serves nearly 57,000 pre-kindergarten through grade 12 students in 125 schools. BPS is committed to transforming the lives of all children through exemplary teaching in a world-class system of innovative, welcoming schools.

“Assess for learning” is one of four essential pillars for Boston Public Schools, along with creating safe and healthy learning environments, fostering student agency, and delivering cognitively demanding tasks.

For BPS, this means teachers are using formative assessment data to continually improve their craft. Using The Data Wise improvement cycle developed by Harvard’s Graduate School of Education, teachers also meet regularly in small teams to dig into student data. They analyze data from a wide range of sources to identify problems of practice, then develop an action plan to solve these problems.

LOCATION

Boston, MA

NUMBERS

Students:	57,000
Staff:	10,000
Schools:	125

The Challenge

In 2018, BPS teachers needed an easy way to assess students' progress more frequently than simply administering district benchmark exams three times per year. They also needed a system for collecting data from these assessments and reporting on the results.

Administrators learned that teachers at different schools or even within the same building were using different tools and platforms to accomplish these goals and sometimes spending hours building their assessments. Some teachers were compiling their own Excel spreadsheets to track and analyze student data, which required a lot of extra work. District officials realized they could ease the burden on educators if they chose a uniform platform for assessment and data management.

"We needed something we could give to all schools that was accessible, relevant, timely, actionable, and easy-to-use. We wanted a system that offered more than one function—and we also needed content that was rigorous and of high quality," said Mike Rubino, Formative Assessment Manager for the Boston Public Schools.

Using DnA to Support Formative Processes

After putting out a call for proposals and evaluating multiple solutions, BPS chose DnA as its platform for assessment and data analysis.

Today, BPS teachers use DnA to easily create various assessments on the fly. For instance, a teacher might start a lesson with a quick, three-question quiz to see how much prior knowledge students have about the topic, using questions pulled directly from the item bank within DnA (and aligned with the standards they intend to cover). Teachers can repeat this process at the end of a lesson to see how their students' knowledge changed from start to finish. They can also use the system to give students daily or weekly writing prompts, create and deliver benchmark exams, or perform a wide range of additional tasks.

IMPLEMENTATION TIP

> "All of that energy and brain power they once used for building standards-based reports can instead go toward innovating their instruction for students."
>
> Mike Rubino,
> Formative Assessment Manager

Teachers can administer the assessments via pencil and paper or online. If they give a paper-based assessment, they can scan students' answer sheets using the camera on their device, and the results show up instantly in DnA.

Teachers and administrators can also use DnA to view and analyze the data from these assessments either by choosing from a variety of existing reports, or creating customized reports showing whatever kinds of data they choose. These reports are also used in data team meetings as teams look for key trends that reveal areas for improvement.

"It has been really exciting to see teachers build reports in DnA and realize they just saved hours of manual labor," Rubino concludes. "All of that energy and brain power they once used for building standards-based reports can instead go toward innovating their instruction for students."

Using technology to help facilitate formative assessment processes can make them easier to work into a daily routine—even if using paper and pencil.

Read the Full Boston Public Schools Case Study

Boston Public Schools uses DnA and Consultative Services to support learning.
To learn more about the Illuminate Solution, reach out today.

Chattahoochee Hills Charter School

Develop custom benchmark exams that exponentially increase student academic and growth outcomes

About Chattahoochee Hills Charter School

As an immersion school, Chattahoochee Hills Charter School's objective is to integrate three key domains into academic content: the arts, agriculture, and the environment. School culture is centered around growth academically, civically, and personally.

At Chattahoochee Hills, nature is embraced as a means for both student learning and well-being. The great outdoors is treated as a conduit for creativity and inquisitiveness, as well as a channel to academic curriculum and mastery. It also serves as a critical backdrop to encourage high attendance and high engagement. The campus features several miles of hiking trails and is home to many animals, including goats, pigs, and chickens.

While Chattahoochee Hills' focus on immersion-based learning is important to the staff, positive student outcomes in well-being, growth, and academics are still paramount.

LOCATION

Chattahoochee Hills, GA

NUMBERS

Students:	552
Grades:	K-8
Schools:	2

The Challenge

In the summer of 2018, the Chattahoochee Hills leadership determined they needed clearer insight into students' needs as they progressed through their learning. This would involve a refurbished assessment program, tailored carefully to their unique scope and sequence without sacrificing standards alignment. The hope was to increase their College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI) scores, a multifaceted score by which the Georgia Department of Education measures school and district effectiveness.

In the 2018-19 school year, Raymond Edwards joined the Chattahoochee Hills team as Director of Curriculum and Instruction. The hire was featured as part of an expanded leadership team tasked with realizing the charter's vision of ever-increasing academic growth while also providing the unique learning experiences central to the charter's structure. To achieve these goals, Edwards knew the team needed assessments that provided deeper insights into their students' specific learning needs and areas of strength, neither of which the team currently had much visibility into.

"When I first got here, it didn't seem like our teams were routinely making instructional decisions based on data," said Edwards. "While teachers were working really hard to support students, the presentation of data and data conversations was a new practice for some." Edwards saw an opportunity to support his team while growing a positive data culture around how they measured data and used the results to inform their pedagogy and practice.

Using DnA to Create Information-Rich Custom Assessments

Edwards started by working with teachers to identify which standards needed to be assessed at various points in the year. Using DnA and the Inspect item bank, Edwards built custom mid- and end-of-trimester assessments by carefully selecting items that aligned to their curriculum's scope and sequence.

DnA also enabled the set up of assessments to yield the highest amount of information about student learning. For instance, by including three DOK 1, three DOK 2, and one DOK 3 level questions for each standard, teachers were able to examine at which level the students were performing with clarity.

Edwards then created question groups and question group alignments for each standard, which allowed the team to analyze the students' strengths and weaknesses. In addition, he created and assigned a performance band to each question group that mirrored the school's criteria for success. Students that scored an 85% or higher demonstrated mastery, a 70-84% demonstrated proficiency, and below a 70% did not show proficiency. Setting these performance bands allowed teachers to plan for differentiated instruction.

The Chattahoochee Hills team uses DnA to make sure their assessments are tightly aligned to their unique scope and sequence, providing teachers with extremely targeted data around their students' learning. Custom reports help present the data in a way that naturally connects those data to differentiated instruction decisions.

IMPROVING STUDENT OUTCOMES

In the first year of using DnA, Chattahoochee Hills students 2019 Georgia Milestones math and science scores soared:

+9% **increase in math proficiency** level in middle school

+43% **increase in science proficiency** level in middle school

Reports That Drive Decisions in the Classroom

After the administration of each trimester exam via DnA, Edwards and his team of teachers would collaborate to analyze the data in order to remediate or enrich the students' mastery.

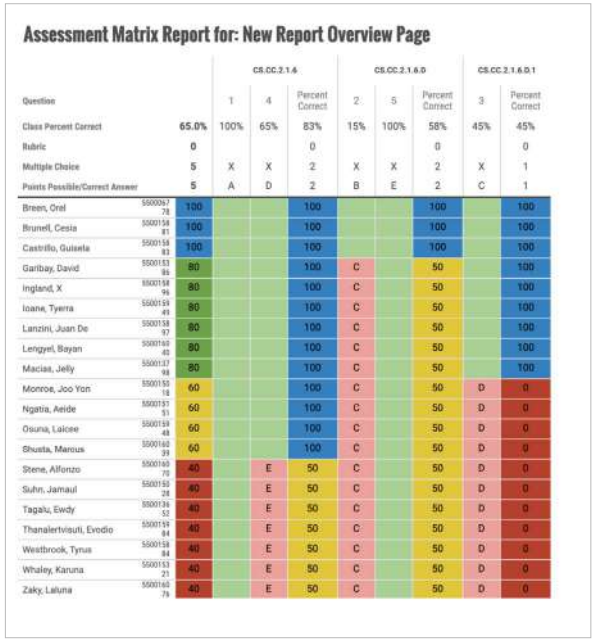
DnA provided a number of pre-built reports that turned the assessment results into specific action steps. It allowed them to create small groups for differentiated instruction and to identify students who need more individualized support, whether in reteaching or enrichment. "Teachers are able to create small groups in their classrooms based on the data, whether it is to enrich a certain group of students or remediate a different group of students," said Edwards. "The difference is simply being able to sit and help them analyze the data so they can make the most informed decision possible."

In accordance with his coaching cycle, he would meet with teachers once a week to evaluate their assessments from the previous week and mid-term exam scores. They would look at both areas of strength and weakness, starting with objective feedback about the results in terms of where students had the most success and where they struggled.

> "Teachers are able to create small groups in their classrooms based on the data, whether it is to enrich a certain group of students or remediate a different group of students."
>
> Raymond Edwards, Director of Curriculum and Instruction

Diving deeper into the questions and items, they would look to identify instructional factors that contributed to the issues and ask what the data might imply. Going a step further, they asked what steps would be required as a response. Any gained knowledge would be turned into a plan for the following week around how they can teach the standard while progressing with the rest of the curriculum.

For the reassessment process, DnA is used to capture the data quickly and organize it in an easy-to-understand layout. “We appreciate how the user can look at every student’s performance, and then apply performance bands and corresponding colors to quickly visualize how students are doing,” said Edwards. For example, students who present with several red areas means they are struggling, while students who show all green would indicate they are ready to move on.



Assessment Matrix Report for: New Report Overview Page

			CS.CC.2.1.6			CS.CC.2.1.6.D			CS.CC.2.1.6.D.1	
Question		1	4	Percent Correct	2	5	Percent Correct	3	Percent Correct
Class Percent Correct	65.0%	100%	65%	83%	15%	100%	58%	45%	45%
Rubric	0			0			0		0
Multiple Choice	5	X	X	2	X	X	2	X	1
Points Possible/Correct Answer	5	A	D	2	B	E	2	C	1
Breen, Orel	5500067 78	100		100			100		100
Brunell, Cesia	5500158 81	100		100			100		100
Castrillo, Guisela	5500158 83	100		100			100		100
Garibay, David	5500153 86	80		100	C		50		100
Ingland, X	5500158 96	80		100	C		50		100
Ioane, Tyerra	5500159 49	80		100	C		50		100
Lanzini, Juan De	5500158 97	80		100	C		50		100
Lengyel, Bayan	5500160 40	80		100	C		50		100
Macias, Jelly	5500137 98	80		100	C		50		100
Monroe, Joo Yon	5500155 18	60		100	C		50	D	0
Ngatia, Aeide	5500151 51	60		100	C		50	D	0
Osuna, Laicee	5500159 48	60		100	C		50	D	0
Shusta, Marcus	5500160 39	60		100	C		50	D	0
Stene, Alfonzo	5500160 70	40	E	50	C		50	D	0
Suhn, Jamaul	5500155 29	40	E	50	C		50	D	0
Tagalu, Ewdy	5500136 52	40	E	50	C		50	D	0
Thanalertvisuti, Evodio	5500159 84	40	E	50	C		50	D	0
Westbrook, Tyrus	5500158 94	40	E	50	C		50	D	0
Whaley, Karuna	5500153 21	40	E	50	C		50	D	0
Zaky, Laluna	5500160 79	40	E	50	C		50	D	0

Additionally, DnA’s Matrix Report helps teams determine the questions with which students struggled the most. Equipped with this information, teachers can use frequently missed items as warm-up questions for their classes. This practice allowed them to remediate unmastered content while continuing to progress through scope and sequence.

IMPLEMENTATION TIP

“DnA does a phenomenal job giving us graphs and charts that organize the data for us and allow us to quickly group students for reteaching,” said Edwards. “It also provides us with items that we could use in any reteaching efforts.”

Closing the Achievement Gap

In 2018-19, Chattahoochee Hills saw its greatest growth in content mastery and student progress in mathematics and science, particularly at the middle school level. This was due in large part to the utilization of data garnered from the assessments created within DnA.

Based on the results from the 2019 Georgia Milestones, the students' proficiency level in math increased from 52.2% to 61.2%. In science, their proficiency increased from 34.4% to an astounding 77.3%. Fifty-four percent of their African-American students scored between the 66th and 99th percentile in their growth in math, while 53% of the economically-disadvantaged students scored in the same percentile range. These results show that students who have traditionally underperformed academically are now outperforming their peers.

Thanks to Edwards and his team, the school increased their middle school CCRPI score from 56.2 (F) to 87.1 (B) in just one year. "Last year yielded some pretty phenomenal results, and I'm sure the students will do the same thing again in the future," said Edwards. "A lot of that has been pushed by our use of data analysis, especially the data and reporting that we get from DnA."

Custom assessments gave the Chattahoochee Hills team new visibility into learning, which meant they had new visibility into what to do next. As a result, their teams were able to truly accelerate learning and advance equitable outcomes.

Read the Full Chattahoochee Hills Charter School Case Study

Chattahoochee Hills Charter School uses DnA, and Inspect to support learning.
To learn more about the Illuminate Solution, reach out today.

Santa Rosa City Schools

Integrating with Google Classroom to support continued learning and engagement

About Santa Rosa City Schools

Located approximately an hour north of San Francisco, Santa Rosa City Schools (SRCS) currently stands as the largest school district in Sonoma County, California. The district welcomes about 16,000 students and 1,600 teachers and staff members across 24 schools.

SRCS adopted the motto of “Every Student, Every Possibility, No Matter What” and has been recognized for their Equity and Social Justice Initiative. With a hugely diverse population, the community lends itself to over 2,600 English Learners (ELs) and 49 different languages spoken at student homes. To help integrate and foster connections with families, the district employs bilingual family engagement facilitators across all schools. In 2016, the district was recognized for their diversity efforts with the Golden Bell Award from the California School Boards Association in the category of School Climate and Safety.

In 2017, the Santa Rosa community suffered a devastating wildfire that consumed the homes of over 800 students and 90 staff members. An elementary school and a high school farm were also destroyed in the process. These experiences served as a guiding point for the district’s ability to adapt when school closures began in early spring 2020 due to Covid.

LOCATION

Santa Rosa, CA

NUMBERS

Students:	16,000
Staff:	1,600
Schools:	24

A Launching Pad to the Digital Present

When Google products first started coming into the district in 2012, the SRCS team had little backing and financial support. Linda Kastanis, an education technology Teacher on Special Assignment (TOSA) at SRCS who has served the district for over 30 years, recalls: “At the time, I was a middle school science teacher and we were a bit behind the times. At that point, there was little funding for classroom technology.”

Over time, with generous donors and tremendous support from the parent community, some of the first iPads, Chromebooks, and other devices were purchased to use in classes. The momentum built by the students who embraced the newfound technology propelled educators like Kastanis to get their Google training and certification. Soon enough, SRCS was not only adapting to the technology platforms, but also looking for other online tools to get ahead.

In 2016, SRCS transitioned to DnA as their main assessment platform. This provided a perfect backdrop for SRCS when the district learned of an integration between DnA and Google Classroom.

Many staff members enrolled in a beta testing cycle. As part of the beta testing group, Kastanis was able to experience initial features and provide direct feedback.

Kastanis and her peers were impressed with the ease of use, along with features like importing Google Classroom Assignment scores from Google Classroom into the DnA Points Based Gradebook, and using the Inspect item bank and pulling scores directly into the Gradebook.

Google Classroom integrations are available for all DnA clients. Post DnA assessments in Google Classroom and receive scores back after students submit their work.

IMPLEMENTATION TIP

Pivoting in the Period of Remote Learning

When Covid broke out in early 2020, all teachers and staff were forced to adapt to a remote environment. Most teachers who were comfortable with DnA and the integration with G Suite were able to seamlessly move their classroom online. Others were familiar with using DnA, but did not share the same proficiency around their use of the tools.

Before the stay-in-place orders, SRCS had about 250 active users of Google Classroom. Seemingly overnight, that figure shot up to over 800. In general, it was being used as a learning management system to organize materials, distribute assignments, assess student work, and communicate with students. Teachers also used the integration of Google Classroom with other online tools to increase engagement and understanding, provide multiple means of assessment, and increase student choice and student voice. Training staff were asked to quickly produce documentation and instructional videos to support those who needed assistance.

Kastanis was supported by her teaching colleagues, who came together as a small group of experienced Google Classroom users to train about 450 teachers over a three-day period, followed up with additional professional development during the district's mini-EdTech summit. The results are reflected in the numbers: Google Classroom integration usage (e.g., posting to / importing from Google Classroom) had increased 75% across schools since the first week of March before the shutdown.

> "As students were falling off the grid, the teachers took a chance with these tools to reach their students and somehow find ways to engage with them."
>
> Linda Kastanis, TOSA

Moving Forward for a New Normal

Moving forward, Kastanis believes technology plans at SRCS will continue to include wider adoption and usage of DnA and the G Suite integration tools. "There's so many ways to support students using Google Apps and DnA that we haven't even touched yet," said Kastanis. "With the new item bank and more user-friendly features, I think we're really going to see a lot more of our teachers wanting training and access."

Though the journey has been challenging, there are silver linings. Many teachers are seeing the value of using the available tools at their disposal to help facilitate instruction and student engagement. "As students were falling off the grid, the teachers took a chance with these tools to reach their students and somehow find ways to engage with them," said Kastanis. "Teachers that now have experienced online tools are very excited about moving forward and integrating these tools into their teaching practices."

Read the Full Santa Rosa City Schools Case Study

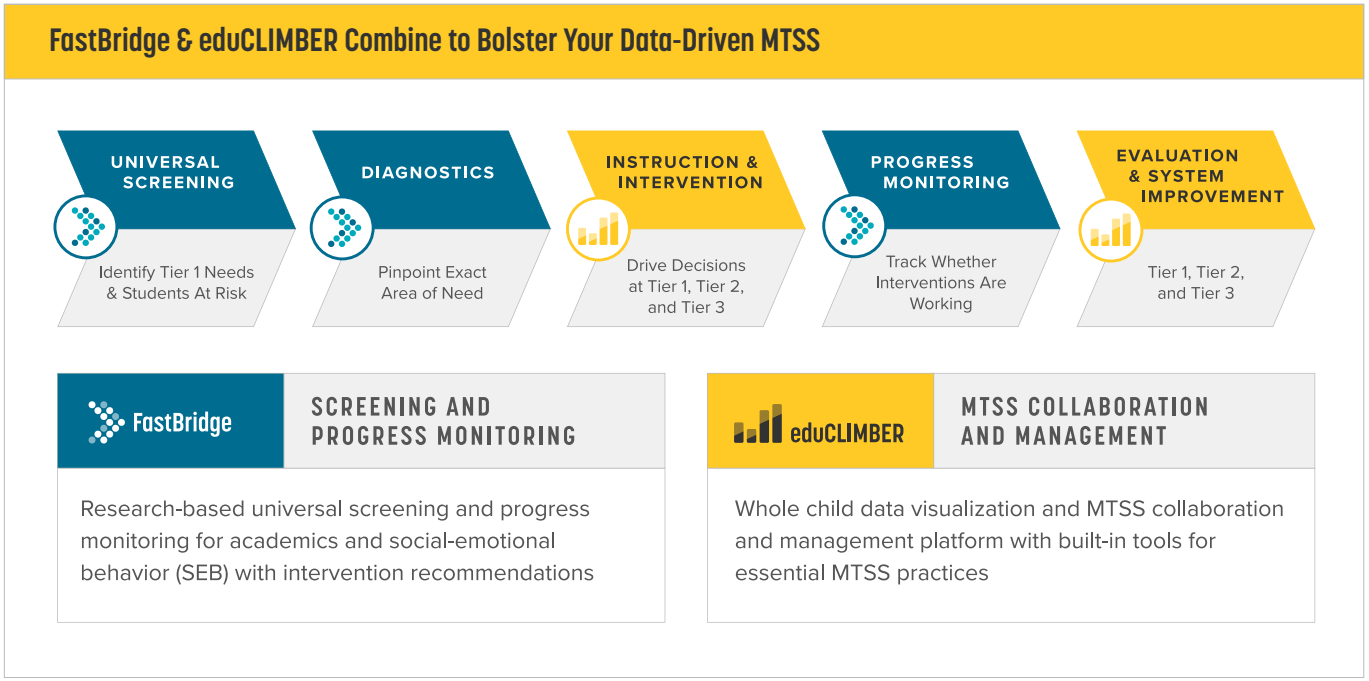
Santa Rosa Schools use DnA, Inspect, and eduCLIMBER to support learning.
To learn more about the Illuminate Solution, reach out today.

Section 3: Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) Management

FastBridge + eduCLIMBER

Illuminate provides screening and progress monitoring assessments for academics and SEB, combined with whole child data visualizations and built-in tools for key MTSS practices—like collaboration, need identification, intervention tracking, effectiveness reporting, and driving system-level improvement.

FastBridge and eduCLIMBER can be used separately, but they are more powerful together.



Learn More About Illuminate's MTSS Management Solution

Wausau School District

Combine screening, progress monitoring, and other whole child data to drive a student-centered, targeted system of support

About Wausau School District

The mission of Wausau School District is to advance student learning, achievement, and success. The district does this by focusing on the whole child, with a strong focus on educational equity. “Our efforts are focused on creating personal and academic success for each child, because we recognize that we are creating learners and leaders who will take us forward into a time of incredible change and progress,” says Superintendent Dr. Keith Hilts.

Like many school systems nationwide, Wausau School District provides varying types of support at different levels of intensity to meet the learning needs of every child, including both academic and social-emotional behavior (SEB) needs.

LOCATION

Wausau, WI

NUMBERS

Students:	8,149
Staff:	1,079
Schools:	20

The Challenge

In Wausau, educators use a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) that focuses on three levels: improving universal instruction for all learners (Tier 1); delivering targeted, small-group intervention for students who need additional support (Tier 2); and providing intensive, individualized interventions for those who need further assistance (Tier 3).

To implement this model successfully, educators must gather accurate and reliable data about their students, correctly interpret and validate this information, and then use the data to make meaningful instructional changes and decisions.

Wausau leaders recognized that teachers needed help with the latter steps in this process—analyzing student information and turning data into action. “We collected a lot of data from our kids, but we weren’t doing justice to interpreting the data,” says Response to Intervention (RtI) Specialist Julie A. Oehmichen.

Leveraging FastBridge and eduCLIMBER to Use Data 'Not as a Hammer, but as a Flashlight'

To help teachers use data to improve their practice, Wausau turned to FastBridge's screening and progress monitoring assessments. FastBridge's universal screeners include reporting that helps teachers easily understand students' learning needs and plan their instruction accordingly. They also use FastBridge's progress monitoring tools to learn whether interventions are working and if they're working quickly enough.

In addition, Wausau educators use eduCLIMBER to gain a comprehensive, 360-degree view of each student. With these two systems working in tandem with each other, Wausau has undergone what Oehmichen calls a "paradigm shift" in how educators use data to drive improvement.

"In many districts, data is used as a hammer to punish teachers and schools," she observes. "We think about data not as a hammer, but as a flashlight. We want it to help us shine a light on what's working and how we can improve instruction to increase the success of our students."

> "We think about data not as a hammer, but as a flashlight. We want it to help us shine a light on what's working and how we can improve instruction to increase the success of our students."
>
> Julie A. Oehmichen, Response to Intervention (RtI) Specialist

Identifying Skills Gaps—and How to Close Them

Wausau uses FastBridge to screen students from elementary to middle and high school, so teachers have longitudinal data with which to track student learning and growth.

All students in kindergarten through ninth grade are tested in reading and math three times per year to get a snapshot of where they are and what foundational skills they might lack. The district also tests certain groups of students in grades 10-12 according to the same schedule, such as English Learners (ELs) and those who have an Individualized Education Program (IEP).

"It's a balance," Oehmichen says. "We don't want to over-assess students, because we know that every time we assess them, we're taking away from instructional time." However, FastBridge screening tools are designed to be administered quickly, minimizing the amount of time needed to assess students while yielding accurate and actionable information, so that teachers can focus more time on instruction.

Teachers meet in grade-level or subject-area teams to review the data and discuss what improvements they need to make to universal (Tier 1) instruction. In addition, RtI teams within each building meet to discuss who might need additional Tier 2 or 3 intervention and whether any adjustments to interventions are needed.

Click to Explore the s2i Report

The reporting within FastBridge helps teachers understand not only what skills students are lacking but also how to close those gaps. One of the reports that teachers find particularly helpful is the Screening to Intervention (s2i) Report.

"That report is so powerful," Oehmichen says, "because it gives teachers instructional recommendations." The s2i Report prescribes specific math and reading interventions, so teachers can easily plan their next steps.

Wausau educators leverage FastBridge's Screening to Intervention (s2i) Report to pinpoint the specific skill gaps where students struggle. The report also provides classwide, small group, and individual student academic instruction and intervention recommendations, taking the guesswork out of how to effectively address those skill gaps.

Gaining Visibility into the Whole Child "Data Story"

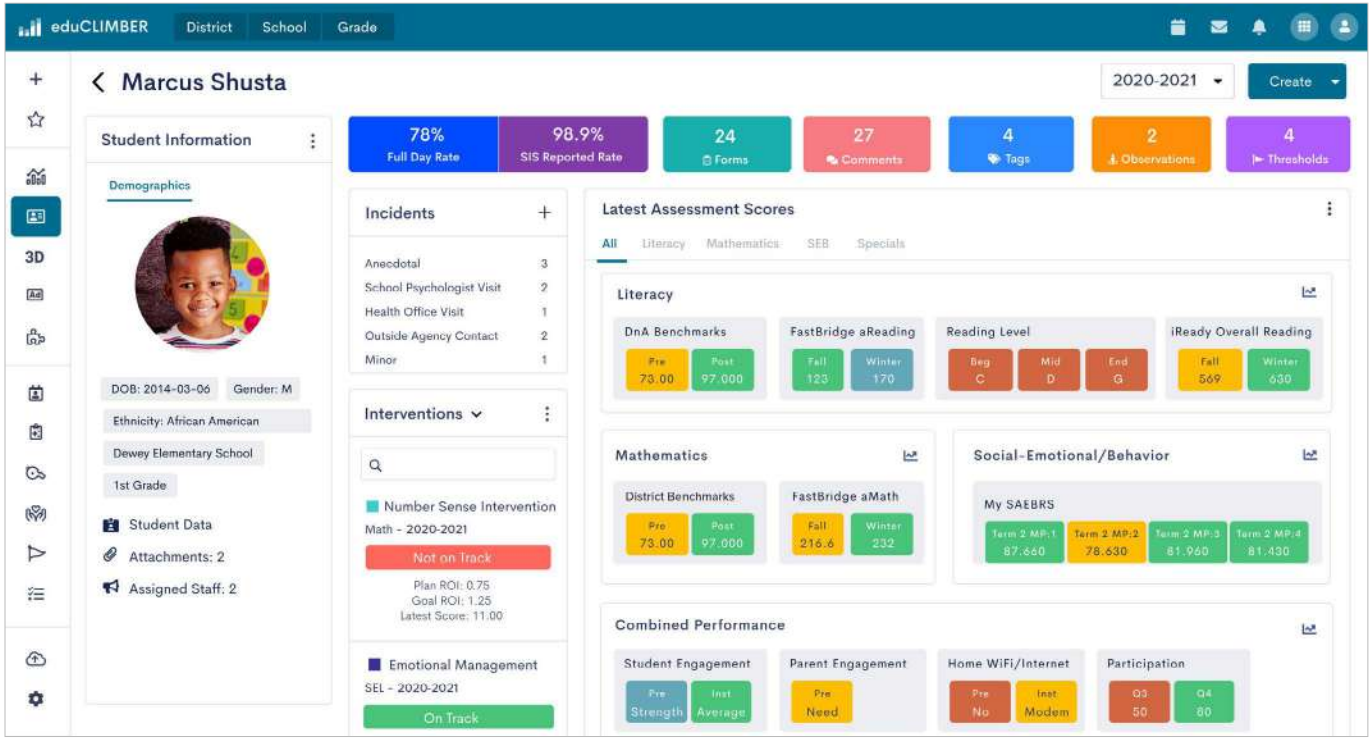
While FastBridge provides insights about students' skills, eduCLIMBER has helped Wausau take data-driven instruction to the next level. Using FastBridge and eduCLIMBER together is helping educators create a "data story" for their classrooms, Oehmichen says.

eduCLIMBER's Student Profile allows educators to hone in on one particular student and has become the "go-to" report for building-level RtI teams. "They can look at it and see everything about that student," Oehmichen says, "including which interventions the student has received in the past and how effective they were." Importantly, FastBridge data are brought into eduCLIMBER, where they can be analyzed as an important piece of each student's larger data picture.

Wausau teachers also use eduCLIMBER's behavior tracking module to record any disciplinary problems they observe in class. With all of those data in a single location, educators can easily triangulate data to uncover the root cause of problems or struggles. In many cases, addressing a non-academic need can lead to increased academic success.

IMPLEMENTATION TIPS

“ It allows us to think about what shifts we need to make within our system to serve all students more effectively. ”



“We had a student in one of our elementary schools who was having major behavioral problems,” Oehmichen says. “By analyzing the data within eduCLIMBER, we found that her issues always occurred around 11 o’clock. Her teacher said, ‘I bet she’s hungry.’ That child participated in a program before school, so she ate breakfast really early. The teacher decided to give her a snack every day around 10:45 to see if that helped—and it made a huge difference in her behavior.”

Observing Larger Trends and Patterns to Target Supports

Teachers are using these data stories to learn more about their students' instructional needs. "We're having teachers analyze historical and current data in order to find trends or patterns that can tell a story," she explains.

For instance, one teacher discovered that many of her students were struggling with math automaticity: knowing their basic math facts. In response to this insight, she has planned a targeted, classwide intervention and built time into her math block every day for activities to help students practice and eventually master their basic multiplication and division facts.

"Our end goal is to see student growth," Oehmichen says. "We want to make sure the interventions we've put into place are a good use of the students' time and are making an impact. Using data is helping us make more meaningful decisions so we can move forward as a classroom, a school, and a district."

Moreover, eduCLIMBER allows users to filter the data in many ways. Wausau administrators are using the platform to look at district-wide student data through the lens of equity to see how various groups of students are doing, such as special education students, ELs, or those who are economically disadvantaged.

"That has been amazing for us," Oehmichen says. "It allows us to think about what shifts we need to make within our system to serve all students more effectively."

With all of their data in one place, Wausau educators are able to dedicate more time to analysis and planning. Educators can better understand whole child needs for individual students, explore outcomes for effectiveness and equity, and ensure that limited resources are going toward impactful strategies.

IMPLEMENTATION TIP

Read the Full Wausau School District Case Study

Wausau School District uses FastBridge, eduCLIMBER, and Achievement Dashboard to support learning. **To learn more about the Illuminate Solution, reach out today.**

Wahoo Public Schools

Enhance system-level strategic decisions around instruction, intervention, and staff supports within an MTSS

About Wahoo Public Schools

Located in eastern Nebraska, Wahoo Public Schools is a Pre K-12 public school with around 1,000 students. Its mission is to inspire students to thrive.

The district is committed to: (1) equipping students for the 21st Century; (2) providing opportunities for students to realize their full potential; (3) creating engaged citizens and; (4) collaborating with the greater Wahoo community.

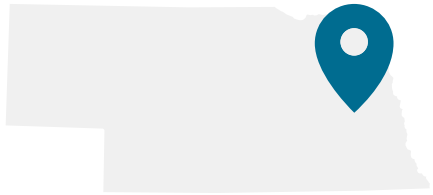
At Wahoo Public Schools, continuous improvement isn't just a goal, it's reality. The district uses a combination of data-driven tools to support its multi-tiered system of support (MTSS), improve data literacy, and inform meaningful decisions where they matter most—at the classroom level.

LOCATION

Wahoo, NE

NUMBERS

Students:	1,070
Staff:	~73
Schools:	4



> "Our district needed a systematic way to use data to inform and drive action, and an improved tool to do it."
>
> Dr. Josh Snyder,
> Director of Learning

The Challenge

During the 2017-18 school year, district leaders began creating and implementing their MTSS. Their goal? "Strengthen our core practices and place a continued focus on systems development," explained Dr. Josh Snyder, Director of Learning at Wahoo Public Schools. "We view MTSS as our district's matrix—the glue that holds everything together."

As an essential building block to their MTSS, Wahoo Public Schools needed an assessment solution to replace their discontinued screener, Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS), that would also support frequent progress monitoring.

"Having a strong, comprehensive system of assessment and protocols was a priority for us," Snyder explained. "When we started putting our MTSS process together, we considered what the best way to get data that are useful at the classroom level and can help inform instructional decisions would be."

Leaders within the district desired a platform that would not only collect the data they needed, but also provide context to help make better decisions.

"Our district needed a systematic way to use data to inform and drive action, and an improved tool to do it," Snyder said. "We needed a tool that would enable us to collect assessment data throughout the year, and also help determine whether student interventions are really working."

Adopting a "Tremendous" System of Assessment

The district decided to pilot FastBridge in half of Wahoo's elementary schools for the 2018-19 school year.

Today, the district is using FastBridge to facilitate universal screening, conduct progress monitoring, and determine targeted interventions. The assessments provide key data to drive Tier 1 improvements and Tier 2 and 3 supports. Since the district started using FastBridge's SAEBRS (Social, Academic, Emotional Behavior Risk Screener) tools, educators have both academic and SEB data to fuel their MTSS decision processes.

Staff are especially pleased with the Screening to Intervention (s2i) Report, which allows teachers to easily take action when additional support is needed.

"FastBridge's s2i Report has been outstanding, and has helped our district complete early reading screening assessments to meet our state's Nebraska READS requirements," Snyder explained. "We use the screening results to provide small- and whole-group support, depending on what's needed."

To further strengthen its MTSS, Wahoo Public Schools implemented eduCLIMBER and Achievement Dashboard during the 2020-21 school year.

Click to learn more

eduCLIMBER as a Central Hub for MTSS Processes

Data from FastBridge sync seamlessly into eduCLIMBER, which has become the central hub for MTSS processes. Staff members lean on eduCLIMBER to access whole child student data quickly and consistently, enabling them to consider factors like student attendance and behavior and adjust core instructional practices accordingly.

"We were notorious for 'passing on the folders', and looking at data had become more of an autopsy, or post-mortem practice, rather than happening in real time," Snyder said. "eduCLIMBER allows us to access data consistently and in a timely manner, which can be used to inform the practices we have in place."

True to their focus on enhancing and improving systems, the district has used eduCLIMBER as a "home base" to streamline a number of processes within their MTSS:

- **Staff members use the Collections tool to store large-scale data in easy-to-navigate folders. Information is organized by grade, department, and measures to monitor student growth at the district, school, and classroom levels, providing a unique whole child view of progress.**
- **Wahoo Public Schools has also taken advantage of smartFORMS, a feature within eduCLIMBER that enables their educators to create and store forms and templates that can be customized for data collection, entry, meeting notes, and more. The district is transitioning all existing forms and other relevant documents into smartFORMS, which has improved efficiency during staff, 504, and problem-solving meetings.**
- **Wahoo Public Schools has also configured eduCLIMBER's Thresholds feature, an early warning system, around their MTSS decisions rules for grades K-2 and 3-5, which are partially based on FastBridge screening data. With this tool, staff members can automate a variety of "if this, then that" type notifications, which are used to flag both student accomplishments and early warnings.**

Whether the topic is attendance, behavior, or academic performance, the district is pulling real-time data to make smart decisions," says Snyder. "eduCLIMBER helped us prioritize where we were at and how we might be able to move forward."

eduCLIMBER's built-in tools help Wahoo educators gain system-level visibility into student and school needs, simplify collaboration and documentation, and enhance their continuous improvement practices.

IMPLEMENTATION TIPS

> "eduCLIMBER helped us prioritize where we were at and how we might be able to move forward."

Using Achievement Dashboard to Bring the Big Picture Together

Lastly, Wahoo Public Schools leverages Achievement Dashboard to create and track custom initiatives related to their MTSS, such as the district's COVID-19 response, results from professional development staff surveys, and other key performance indicators (KPIs).

Since Achievement Dashboard is a seamless component of eduCLIMBER, the district's FastBridge data—and all other whole child data—can be easily brought into visualizations to monitor district-level progress toward high-level improvement goals and student progress.

"Achievement Dashboard is a great tool that we're using to support initiatives like our district's continuous improvement process, accreditation visits, and strategic planning," says Snyder. "We just finished up our five year accreditation visit, and have plans to utilize the Achievement Dashboard for that purpose moving forward. We're also using the dashboard to put together action plans."

Forming an MTSS Trifecta for Driving System-Level Improvements

Used together, FastBridge, eduCLIMBER, and Achievement Dashboard streamline key processes in Wahoo's MTSS and enable faster, more targeted data-driven decision making at the district, classroom, and student levels.

With its MTSS trifecta, Wahoo Public Schools is:

- Strengthening MTSS and driving quarterly data meetings
- Supporting daily work and moving instructional practices forward
- Improving data literacy across the district

Snyder and his team are excited about next steps and using Illuminate's tools to further streamline their team's work.

"It's okay to go slow, but we have to go—we need to keep moving forward. We can't let the quest for 'perfect' get in the way of progress. As long as we're making progress, the rewards are going to be gleaned by our students, and that's our end goal."

Read the Full Wahoo Public Schools Case Study

Wahoo Public Schools uses FastBridge, eduCLIMBER, and Achievement Dashboard to support learning.
To learn more about the Illuminate Solution, reach out today.

Newton County School System

Remove some heavy lifting in a data-driven MTSS to give educators time back with students

About Newton County School Systems

Located just east of metro Atlanta, the Newton County School System (NCSS) is the twenty-first largest district in the state of Georgia. It is home to 13 elementary schools, five middle schools, three high schools, a theme school (grades K-6), a charter school, and an alternative education program. The diverse district is 57% African American, 29% Caucasian, and 8% Hispanic. 72% of the student population is economically disadvantaged, and the district's high mobility rates can reach up to 52% in some buildings.

The district's preeminent core belief is "Students are our first priority." NCSS culture is defined by district-wide dedication to supporting every single student, meeting students where they are, and focusing on growth. They work toward these goals through a strong, engaged data culture and responsive systems of support.

LOCATION

Covington, GA

NUMBERS

Students:	21,240
Grades:	2,000
Schools:	23

The Challenge

Monitoring and responding to the needs of every student is no small task—particularly in a district of over 20,000 students. But NCSS's 2014-15 implementation of DnA helped the district make huge strides toward that goal. Teachers started using DnA to administer formative, common, and district-level assessments. They were thrilled at their increased ability to monitor data for all students. Today, Dr. Allison Jordan, who serves as Director of Testing, Research & Evaluation, sees the impact of DnA in every classroom. "The use of DnA has completely transformed the way that we look at and use data. It has become part of who we are."

Yet as student needs evolve, teachers and administrators continually work to monitor whole child needs for all students through many data lenses. In addition to achievement data, student behavior, attendance, social-emotional, and mental health data all provide invaluable information about student needs. "Education is changing," says Jordan. "We need to change, too, if we are to serve our students."

In fall 2018, the district decided to supplement their DnA implementation with eduCLIMBER. This was due to the range and depth of student data that could be housed in the platform, as well as the product's teacher-friendly visualizations and ability to automate alerts when specific data criteria are met. Jordan saw the opportunity to never miss a signal that a student was in immediate need of support, at risk of falling behind, or at risk of harming themselves or others.

Implementing for Long-Term Success

The district approached its eduCLIMBER implementation in the context of previous implementations and experience around what worked for their team. They knew that they wanted to "go slow to go fast." In addition, they wanted their implementation to be informed by school-level feedback around which features resonated the most and best supported teachers in their daily work.

For that reason, NCSS started with an eduCLIMBER rollout in three schools: two elementary schools and one middle school. They also planned a wider rollout for the following year, based on the experiences and feedback of these schools.

After providing basic training, the district suggested that the schools start by selecting and using eduCLIMBER for a single job-embedded task. This approach was a nod to teachers' workloads and intended to curb any initiative fatigue.

IMPLEMENTATION TIP

The schools initially gravitated toward different tasks. One school started using eduCLIMBER to monitor and analyze attendance data for trends, and another used it to monitor the office discipline referral incidents. District leaders hoped that the schools would naturally start exploring the system more, discover additional applications for using eduCLIMBER, and become excited about the system through the process. And it worked.

> "Teachers are looking at it from the perspective of, 'How can we use eduCLIMBER to eliminate ten other things we're doing?'"
>
> Dr. Allison Jordan, Director of Testing, Research & Evaluation

Administrators and coaches alike saw proof positive that eduCLIMBER could make their jobs easier. Today it is no longer a matter of using eduCLIMBER for a single, job-embedded task. "Teachers are looking at it from the perspective of, 'How can we use eduCLIMBER to eliminate ten other things we're doing?'" said Jordan.

As part of their implementation approach, the district also ensured that as much data as possible were automating into eduCLIMBER, including the district's DnA data and data from FastBridge, such as progress monitoring and SAEBRS (Social, Academic, Emotional Behavior Risk Screener) data. Behavior incident data, attendance data, and gradebook information all sync in as well, giving teachers easy, one-stop access to data for their students.

IMPLEMENTATION TIP

Giving Teachers Back Time to Focus on Students

The ease of integrating and visualizing data immediately began to streamline data processes. Teachers no longer had to pull together data from spreadsheets and multiple websites and three-ring binders. Everything about a student was automatically in one place and interactive. Teachers could drill down into scores, skills, and strands in academic data, and then do a deep dive into attendance or behavior.

eduCLIMBER has also started to eliminate double-entry—a common struggle for data-driven districts, and a huge burden for NCSS. As a former site administrator, Jordan believes that protecting teachers' time and keeping them in the classroom with students is paramount. "Our kids need us to be present, and we cannot be present if we are inundated with manual entry," she said. "Our teachers were spending so much time entering the same data into two systems that didn't even talk to each other." This double-entry was especially time-consuming for data that apply to every student, such as PBIS behavior incidents. With the data automations in place, double-entry is poised to become a thing of the past.

Following the district's implementation strategy of focusing on job-embedded solutioning, teams naturally started using eduCLIMBER for other tasks. Some educators started using the Meeting module to take notes and assign action steps during their meetings. Others started using the built-in classroom observation tool. Importantly, these were all tasks the educators selected for themselves and truly needed. "They think it's magic. That's exactly the response you want to see."

Leadership encouraged their teams to help guide implementation. As a result, eduCLIMBER was immediately targeted around their most urgent logistical and procedural challenges.

> "Our kids need us to be present, and we cannot be present if we are inundated with manual entry...Our teachers were spending so much time entering the same data into two systems that didn't even talk to each other."

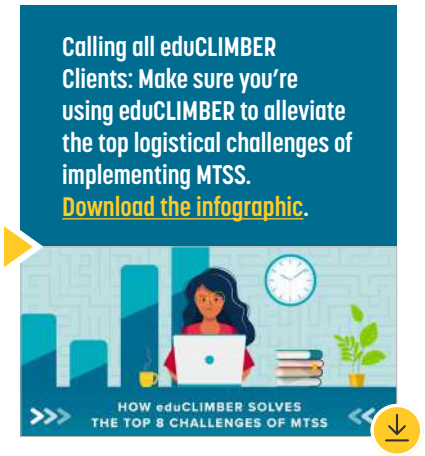
Automating Data to Fuel MTSS

eduCLIMBER gives the district instant visibility into Tier 1 instruction effectiveness, and also makes it easy to record and analyze Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions and supports. That information can be viewed for individual students and at the district, school, or group level. "It's going to completely change the way we approach MTSS," said Jordan.

With the Thresholds module available in eduCLIMBER, NCSS can set automated alerts across many whole child data sources. It means that the right teachers, counselors, specialists, and principals would receive instant notifications when their students are in need of additional or different supports.

In a large district, the automated piece is key. It would be a first line of procedural action to enable immediate, responsive, and collaborative action for kids. That lift off teacher workloads would also give them back the time and focus they need to act on data and provide the interpersonal, deep connection that students need to thrive.

Ultimately, it would bring them that much closer to NCSS's goal of supporting every single student, no matter where they are and what they need to succeed.



The prospect of monitoring every student's ever-evolving needs can be daunting. Thresholds can help make this possible with 24/7 data monitoring and automated email alerts that go to the right users when students cross a threshold.

That lift off teacher workloads would also give them back the time and focus they need to act on data and provide the interpersonal, deep connection that students need to thrive.

Read the Full Newton County School System Case Study

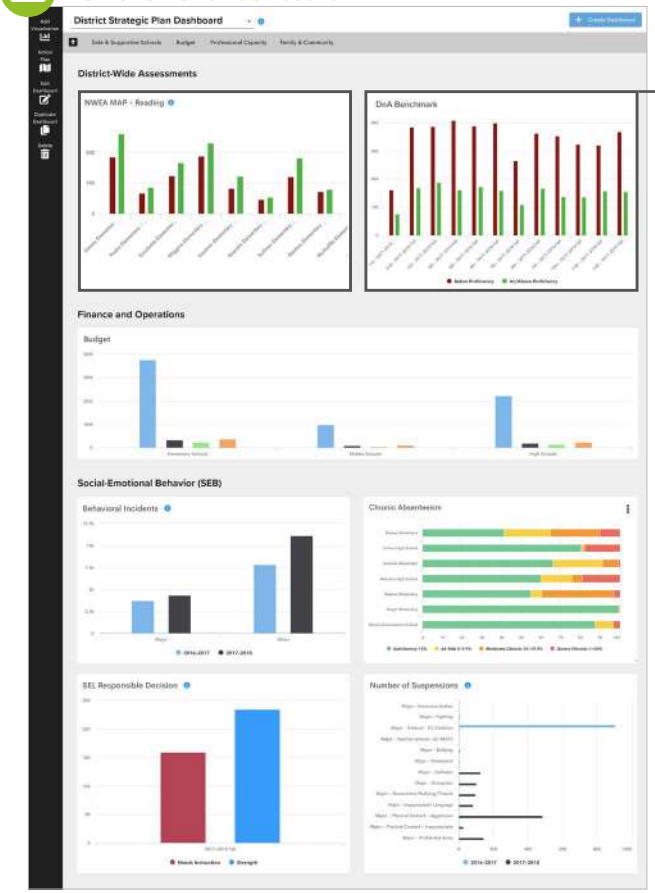
Newton County School System uses DnA, Inspect, FastBridge, eduCLIMBER, and Achievement Dashboard to support learning. **To learn more about the Illuminate Solution, reach out today.**

Section 4: Real-Time Dashboards

Achievement Dashboard

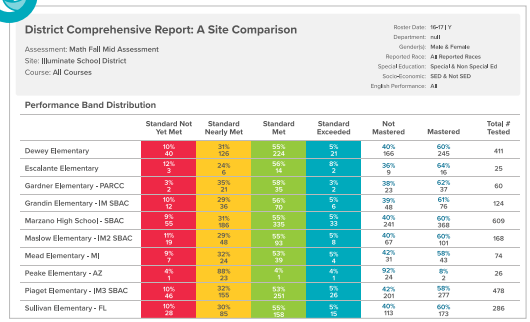
Illuminate provides interactive data visualizations that enable administrators to view key data, monitor initiatives via an equity lens, and share easy-to-understand information with all stakeholders.

Achievement Dashboard

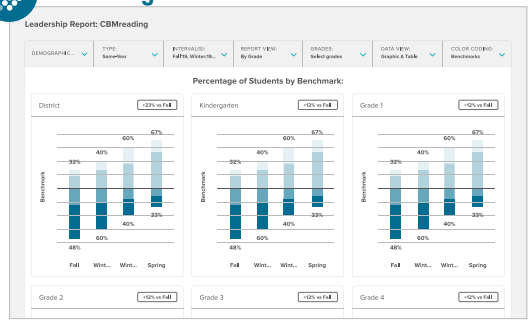


Access District Data in One Place for Strategic Planning

DnA



FastBridge



Learn More About Illuminate's Real-Time Dashboard Solution

Oxford Community Schools

Leverage dashboards to analyze district data, monitor progress, and foster transparency and engagement with the community

Oxford Community Schools

Located approximately 40 miles northwest of Detroit, Oxford Community Schools serves over 7,000 students across 85 square miles in North Oakland County. While approximately 25% of Oxford's student population is economically disadvantaged and 10% of learners are enrolled in special education, the district's graduation rate is over 92%. Oxford is the only K-12 International Baccalaureate (IB) school district in Michigan.

Oxford's leadership team is guided by their Strategic Alignment work, a roadmap of comprehensive goal setting and planning to realize Oxford's mission: providing an education that challenges all students to achieve their maximum potential in academics, arts, and athletics and prepares them to succeed in a global society. The Strategic Alignment work has also informed the creation of two other milestone accomplishments: (1) articulating the district's Portrait of a Graduate and (2) developing the district's Strategic Plan, a set of three main areas of focus—Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment; Organizational Culture; and School Culture—with strategic goals and timeframes tied to each.

In the eyes of the Oxford leadership team, if an initiative doesn't align with their strategic work, it doesn't align with what's best for Oxford Community Schools' students. "It's important that we're in a constant reflective state, ensuring our actions and our priorities are aligned with our Strategic Plan," says Anita Qonja-Collins, Assistant Superintendent of Elementary Education. "It's equally important to ensure that our resources, finances, and time investments align around the Strategic Plan to ensure our goals are being met."

LOCATION

Oxford, MI

NUMBERS

Students: 7,105

Schools: 10

Teachers: 370

> " It was really important for us to understand our stakeholders' experiences and perspectives. "
>
> Dr. Gary van Staveren, Assessment, Grants, and School Improvement Supervisor

The Challenge

When the pandemic caused Oxford Community Schools to close in March 2020, the shift to remote instruction was initially expected to last only a few days or a few weeks. Accordingly, teachers spent the first few weeks focusing on students' social-emotional well-being and safety instead of emphasizing academic learning.

In April, the state advised that seated instruction was not likely to resume in Michigan before the end of the year. Like so many districts, the Oxford leadership team had to develop remote learning plans and engagement strategies for their students almost overnight.

In terms of land, Oxford is a large district and serves students across 85 square miles. District leaders knew that students' experiences during remote learning might vary greatly in terms of homelife environments, family situations, and device and internet connectivity. To ensure their remote learning plans were as successful and impactful as possible, they sought to use data to guide their strategy.

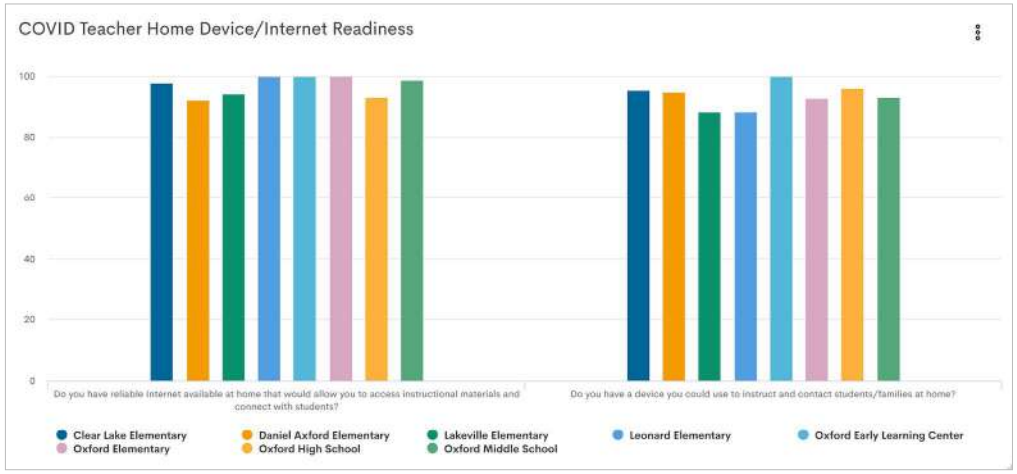
"We had to quickly shift gears to understand everyone's readiness for remote learning," recalls Dr. Gary van Staveren, the Assessment, Grants, and School Improvement Supervisor at Oxford Community Schools. "It was really important for us to understand our stakeholders' experiences and perspectives."

To acquire this data, the district issued a survey to students, families, and teachers. The survey had great participation, including responses from 675 parents and 287 students.

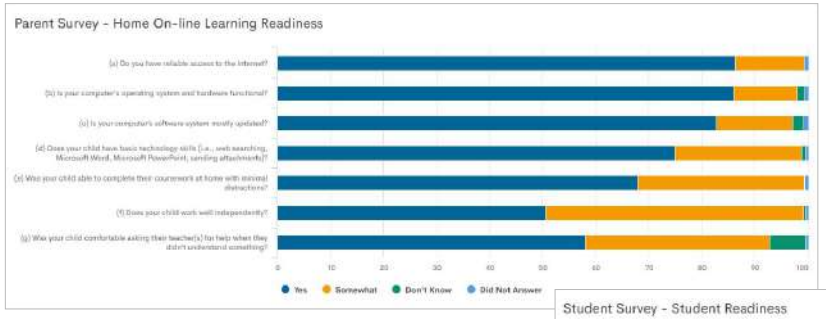
The team now needed a way to make those data easier to interpret and visualize—not only to help monitor and maintain learning throughout the rest of the year, but also to inform decisions for fall instruction and provide transparency to the community.

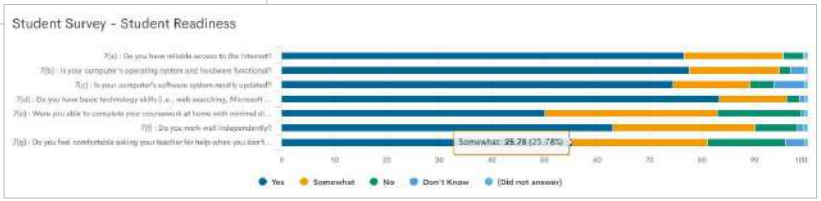
Making Survey Data Actionable with Dashboards

The Oxford team used Achievement Dashboard to help them visualize and interpret their survey data and develop remote learning plans that acknowledged the needs and concerns of all stakeholders.



One visualization shows data on home device and internet readiness, revealing that there were indeed gaps in access that they would need to address, as the team suspected. The district learned that issues of access were not limited to students and families. “We also found that some of our teachers didn’t have access to the internet with which to provide instruction,” observes van Staveren.



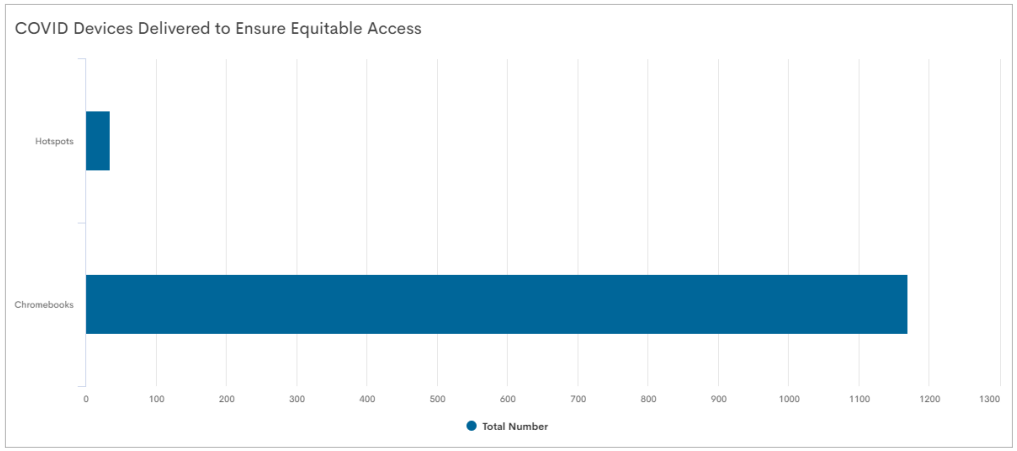


IMPLEMENTATION TIP

Survey or summary data sometimes get siloed from other whole child data. By using Achievement Dashboard as an extension of eduCLIMBER, the Oxford team was able to keep their student data together and help both staff and community members visualize the survey results they’d collected. Illuminate’s Advanced Features Setup Services team helped create the right visualizations for Oxford’s needs.

> "As a district, ensuring that we're providing equal opportunity to all was a really big piece of the puzzle."
>
> Dr. Christine Russell,
> District MTSS Coordinator

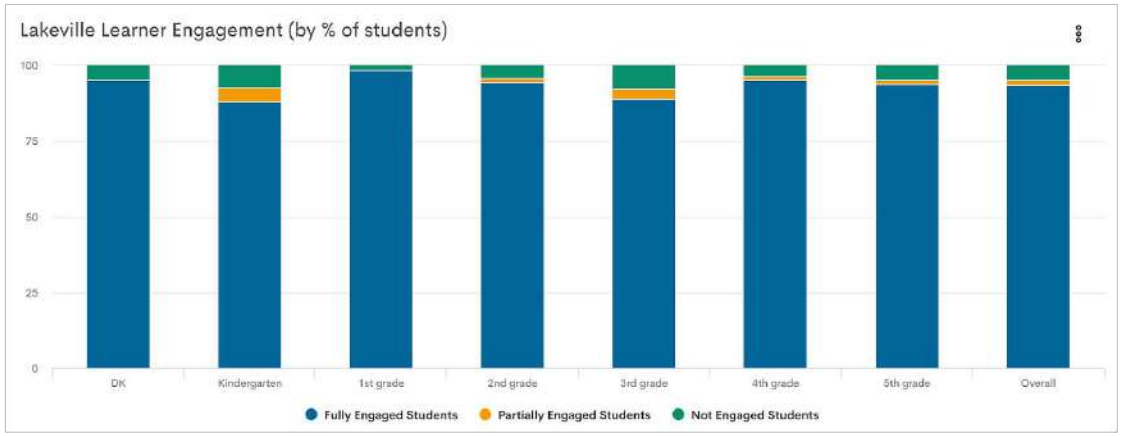
Equipped with this information, district leaders were able to respond quickly and report on their progress, providing important updates to the community around how they were addressing those areas of inequity. "As a district, ensuring that we're providing equal opportunity to all was a really big piece of the puzzle," shares Dr. Christine Russell, the MTSS Coordinator for the district.



Getting a Fuller Picture of Remote Learning—and Sharing it with the Community

The team also used Achievement Dashboard to visualize and analyze other aspects of remote learning to gauge both participation and impact.

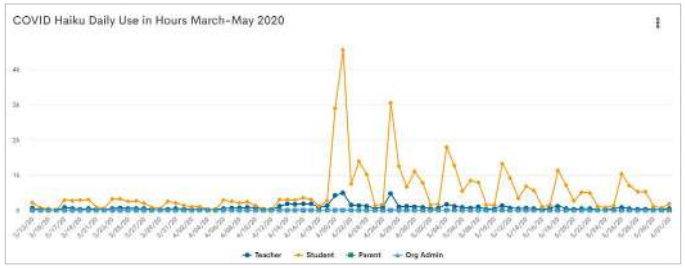
Gaining visibility into student and teacher engagement was critical. "We were trying to keep instruction really engaging and meaningful for the students," notes Qonja-Collins. "We had to be really creative even with how we were using Zoom." She shares that teachers were going above and beyond to keep learners engaged through breakout sessions, polls, and other educational tools.

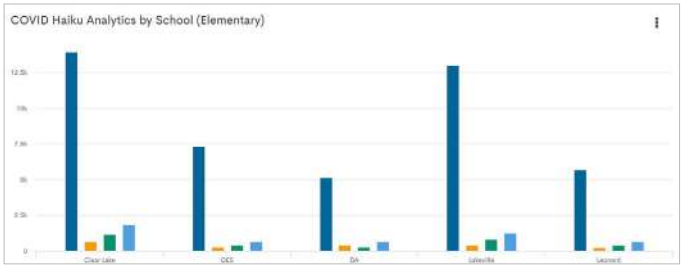


Knowing the immense effort teachers were putting in, the leadership team needed to know what engagement looked like by district, school, grade, and even educator in order to offer ongoing support to staff. To that end, they uploaded usage data from Zoom, which was used for class instruction and student check-ins, as well as Haiku, which was used as a learning platform, into Achievement Dashboard as well.

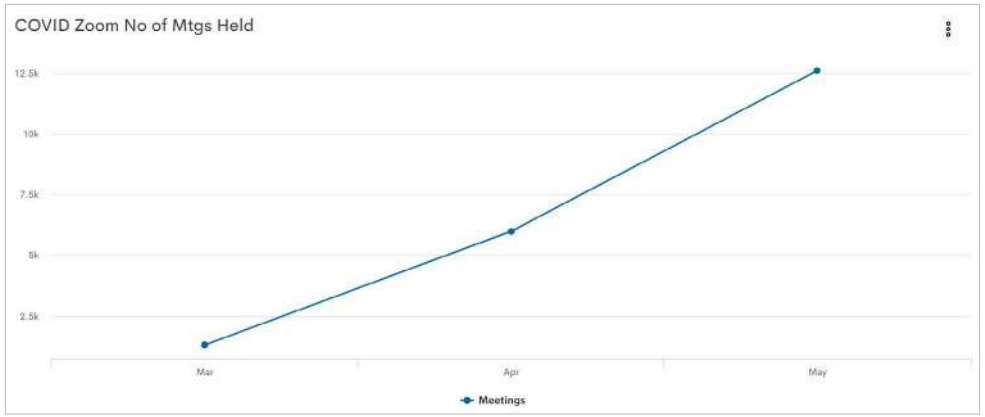
As expected, usage increased after the full shift to remote learning, but they were surprised to see just how much of a surge the data showed.

“We have a graph that demonstrates daily learning from March through May,” explained van Staveren. “On a particular day in April, we saw that over 4,000 hours of learning took place across the district in a single day. It was really phenomenal.”





The data also showed that Zoom usage rose steadily across the semester, reaching almost 13,000 Zoom meetings in May. By looking at the usage data by user, the district was also able to monitor which teachers were using Zoom the most and the least. If anything was surprising, the team could reach out to the teacher and see if they needed support, whether in logistics or in engagement strategy ideas.

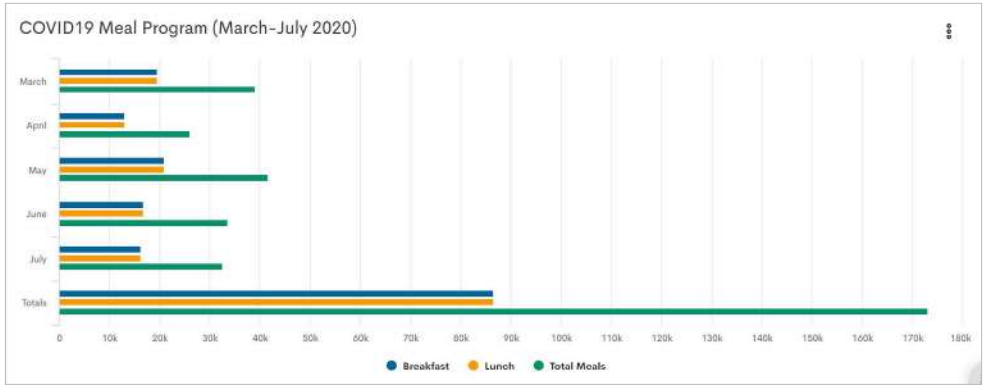


Oxford's central office team is extremely dedicated to engaging the community as partners in students' success.

IMPLEMENTATION TIP

As part of their ongoing commitment to transparency and collaboration, Oxford was able to use Achievement Dashboard's Public Image feature to securely post these data visualizations on their district website. The visualizations were easy for all stakeholders to understand and were an important tool in depicting the district's overall response to the pandemic.

For example, the team tracked meal distribution through July. By doing so, the central office was able to share with the community that they distributed over 170,000 meals to students over a span of five months.

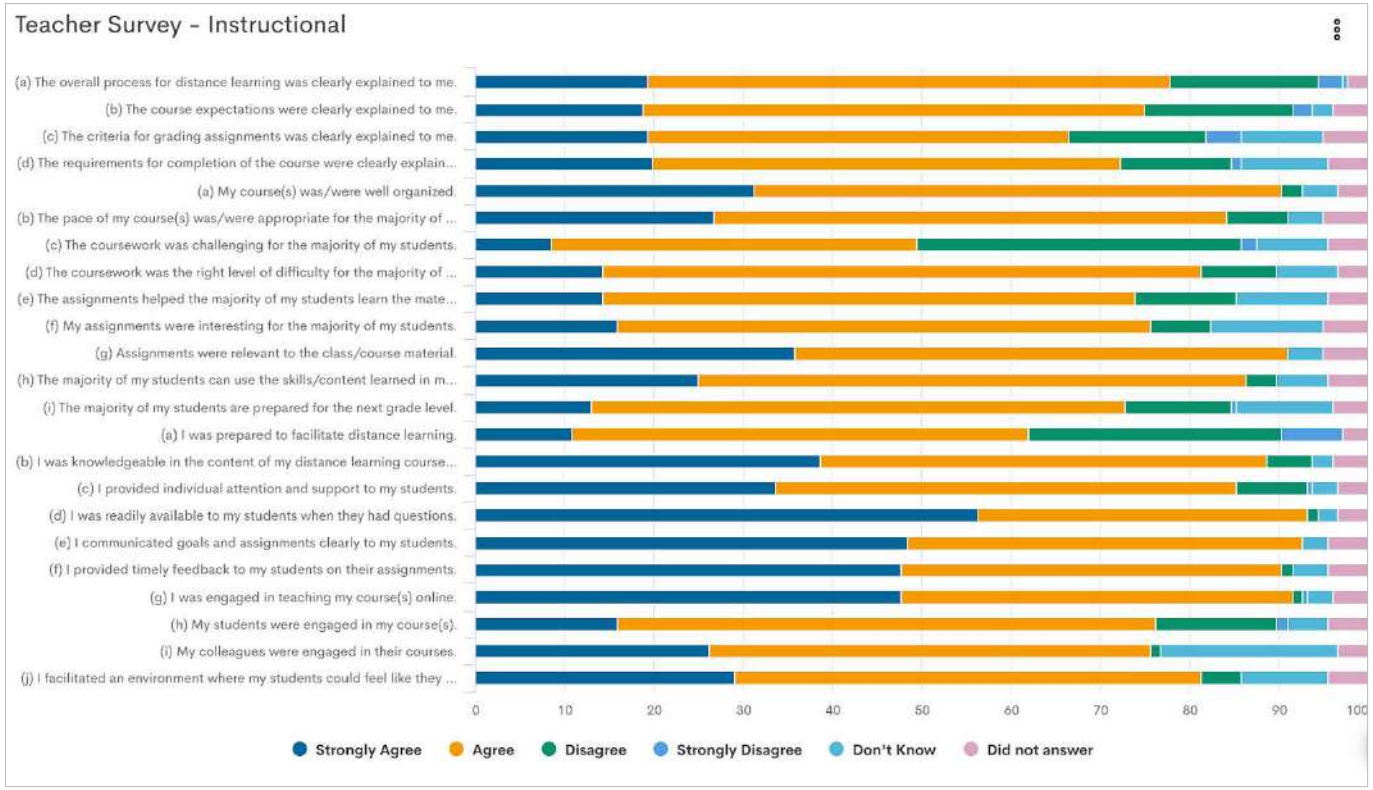


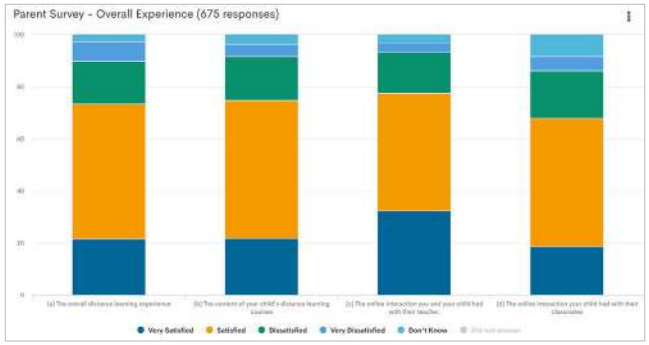
Planning for Fall 2020

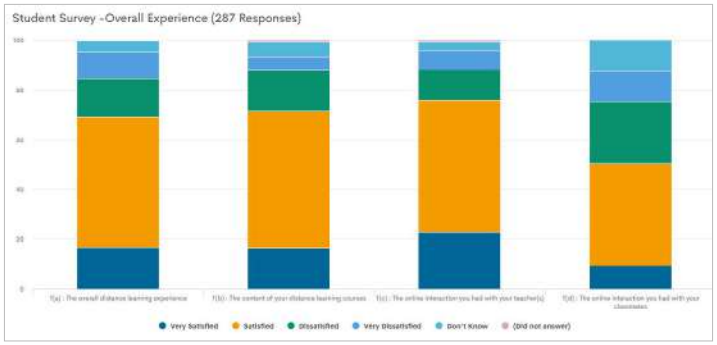
Of the 28 districts in Oakland County, only two chose to return to seated learning in fall 2020. Oxford Community Schools was one of them.

Though starting in seated instruction, Oxford did offer families the choice to continue remote instruction through Oxford Virtual Academy (OVA), a K-12 online school established over 10 years ago. Approximately 1,000 students chose to remain in remote instruction for the 2020-21 school year.

With such a large percentage continuing in remote environments, the team issued additional surveys to elicit feedback on spring remote instruction to improve experiences for remote students in the fall. These survey data were also added to Achievement Dashboard to help determine strengths, identify areas for improvement, and better understand the needs and desires of the wider Oxford community.







> "We had to factor in those parent and student concerns to help our teachers be as prepared as possible in the fall."
>
> Dr. Gary van Staveren, Assessment, Grants, and School Improvement Supervisor

Not only did this information help inform procedural and structural aspects of remote learning in the 2020-21 school year, but it also helped Oxford leadership ensure that teachers knew as much as possible around their incoming students.

In a normal year, educators in Oxford are accustomed to having a wealth of student data at their fingertips to guide their decisions. For this reason, the loss of spring data—both state assessment data as well as screening and other end of year data—was especially jarring for teachers.

"Without having the spring data we typically use for planning, many of our teachers were wondering 'How do I move forward?' for the first time," observes Russell.

To fill this gap, teachers were provided with longitudinal data for their incoming students, as well as key insights from the district's survey data. Together, these data helped Oxford teachers better understand where their students were coming from—physically, mentally, and especially social-emotionally.

For example, one survey asked parents to rate their concern over their child's overall social-emotional well-being, given the pandemic. 22% of parents responded Very Concerned, 24% responded Concerned, and 31% responded Somewhat Concerned.

"That's pretty significant," remarks van Staveren. "We had to factor in those parent and student concerns to help our teachers be as prepared as possible in the fall."

Since Achievement Dashboard is a seamless component of eduCLIMBER, these survey and learning engagement analytics data live alongside the rest of the district's whole child data picture.

Watch the Oxford Community Schools Presentation

Oxford Community Schools uses DnA, FastBridge, eduCLIMBER, Achievement Dashboard, and Consultative Services to support learning. **To learn more about the Illuminate Solution, reach out today.**

Section 5: Social-Emotional Behavior (SEB)

FastBridge

Research-based universal screening and progress monitoring assessments to identify students' SEB needs, guide social-emotional learning (SEL) curriculum and professional development decisions, inform SEB interventions, and measure SEB intervention effectiveness.

FastBridge

SCREENING AND PROGRESS MONITORING

Research-based universal screening and progress monitoring for academics and social-emotional behavior (SEB) with intervention recommendations

Independently adapted from CASEL's SEL Framework.
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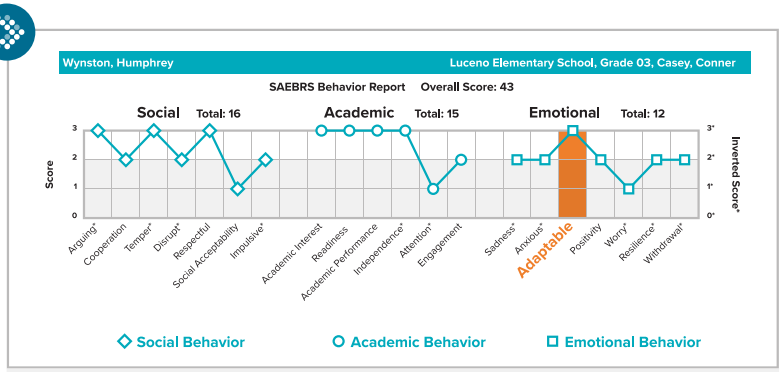


To identify how well developed self-awareness management skills are in students, ask yourself:

EMOTIONAL BEHAVIOR

1. How well do they adapt to change?
2. Do they have difficulty rebounding from setbacks?
3. Are they withdrawn or appear worried?
4. Do they tend to have a positive attitude?

Learn More About Illuminate's [Social-Emotional Behavior (SEB) Solution]

Clarksville-Montgomery County School System

Support student success with social-emotional behavior (SEB) data

About Clarksville-Montgomery County School System

Clarksville-Montgomery County School System (CMCSS) in Clarksville, Tennessee is the seventh largest district in the state. On average, about nine new students enter the school system every day.

As a district, CMCSS is very solution-focused. Once data reveal a problem, educators jump into action to identify root causes and solve underlying issues using a strategic and intentional approach.

“We may see our data and realize there are distinct needs, but no one is stuck admiring the problem,” says Patti Wilson, District Response to Instruction and Intervention Coordinator. “There is an immediate focus on strategic problem-solving—what are the target areas and how do we prevent them from occurring and provide early intervention to close gaps?”

LOCATION

Clarksville, TN

NUMBERS

Students:	36,606
Staff:	5,100
Schools:	39

The Challenge

CMCSS educators believe that every student has a story. And that story can tell them a lot about each student's academic needs. Yet capturing the right data to piece together the full, unique stories for each of the district's nearly 37,000 students is a significant challenge.

The district required an assessment solution that could provide robust and reliable data around academics as well as social-emotional behavior (SEB) skills. The data provided by their current system could not capture a student's whole story in one single, integrated assessment solution.

"The data reports were not nearly as specific as we wanted," she says. "We're a data-rich district. If we're going to take time for students to take an assessment, we want to make sure the data we receive can be used in a productive way to drive instruction and intervention. And that system was solely academic-based. We didn't have anything to look at in terms of SEL or behavior. This was a huge issue for us, because it meant that we were spreading ourselves across multiple platforms."

Launching (and Expanding) the FastBridge Pilot

CMCSS piloted the FastBridge SEB assessments, SAEBRS and mySAEBRS, in 2018-19 starting in a single middle school with a highly diverse student population, high percentages of transient and economically marginalized students, and a need for positive behavior supports due to a high number of behavior referrals and write ups.

Additionally, a middle school was chosen for piloting behavior screening as, if successful, the data could help with transition planning for students entering high school.

IMPLEMENTATION TIP

"The school counselors were searching for a way to better support students, and once I presented FastBridge to those counselors and the school leadership team, they were sold immediately," Wilson says. "Once they saw the data they could get, it was all about functionality: 'How soon can we do it?' 'How quickly can we get results?' It really spread like wildfire."

> "Teachers were excited to have both a teacher and student perspective of behavior, and appreciated that the assessments weren't time consuming."
>
> Patti Wilson,
> District Response to Instruction and Intervention Coordinator

Leaders from many of the district's other schools desired the same actionable SEB data to inform supports for new students entering their buildings. By spring 2019, thanks to the benefits they were already seeing, CMCSS began administering FastBridge SEB assessments to all rising 6th grade and 9th grade students. By fall of 2019-20, they decided to include every K-8 student in the district in the screening.

"We were a little worried because this was going to be one more thing we were going to ask teachers to do, but we didn't have those barriers," Wilson says. "Teachers were excited to have both a teacher and student perspective of behavior, and appreciated that the assessments weren't time consuming."

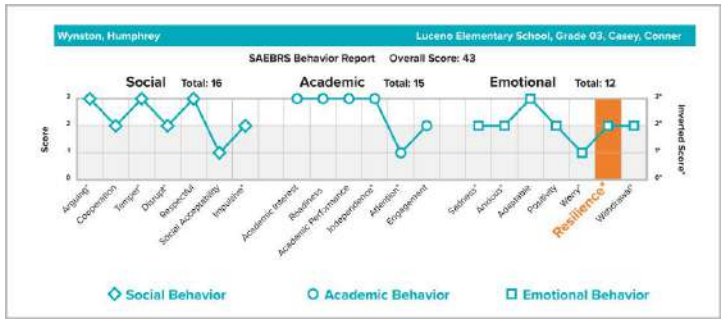
Using SEB Data to Drive Student Supports

In CMCSS, SAEBRS and mySAEBRs screening data are not only informing district-level planning, but also making a difference at the student level. The district uses each component of the measures to guide various planning areas. For example:

- **Data from SAEBRS' Social scale helps educators strategically place students who require additional structure. This data also guides professional development for teachers who are paired with these students so they are prepared for possible challenges.**
- **SAEBRS' Academic scale data helps educators match students who struggle in areas like time and task management with teachers who purposefully and seamlessly integrate executive functioning skills into content teaching.**
- **CMCSS' counselors and social workers utilize SAEBRS' Emotional scale data to select and plan small-group and one-on-one counseling opportunities. These data also provide additional insight for teacher observations, parent and/or student referrals, attendance, grades, and more, helping determine the "why" behind student skill deficits.**

SAEBRS' subscale scores help CMCSS educators more accurately understand SEB needs in the district and drive system-level supports and resources to meet them.

IMPLEMENTATION TIPS



> “Analyzing data from SAEBRS and mySAEBRS screening, and pairing that with our data sources, has helped our teams discover the possible ‘why’ behind the ‘what.’”

Calling FastBridge Clients: Did you know that SEB screening and progress monitoring are included in your subscription? If you haven’t started using these tools, learn more here.

Combining SEB with Math and Reading Data

Because CMCSS also uses FastBridge for academic screening and progress monitoring, their team analyzes SEB alongside academic reports to determine supports that nurture the whole student.

“Analyzing data from SAEBRS and mySAEBRS screening, and pairing that with our data sources, has helped our teams discover the possible ‘why’ behind the ‘what,’” Wilson says. “It’s one thing to look at grades and see a student is struggling across most content areas. But when you’re able to piece together additional pieces of that data story—that they lack readiness skills or have difficulty with sustained attention and initial engagement—that informs the type of intervention needed. This same academic score profile could exist for five students, and all for very different reasons. FastBridge assessments offer additional pieces to add to a student’s data story, and we want to fill in as many missing pieces as we can so our supports are strategic and targeted.”

Read the Full Clarksville-Montgomery County School System Case Study

Clarksville-Montgomery County School System uses FastBridge to support learning.
To learn more about the Illuminate Solution, reach out today.

Decatur Public Schools

Screen for both academic and social-emotional behavior (SEB) needs—even remotely

About Decatur Public Schools

Located in central Illinois, Decatur Public Schools is a small urban school system. About 72 percent of its students come from low-income families. Despite the challenges that this can pose, the district is committed to educating all students for lifelong success.

The vision for the Decatur Public Schools is that all students will become responsible, caring, and productive citizens of society in a setting where students, parents, staff, and community members share responsibility; district leadership motivates people, policies, and decisions; and all resources are used effectively and efficiently.

LOCATION

Decatur, IL

NUMBERS

Students:	8,700
Staff:	1,200+
Schools:	17

The Challenge

Due to the impacts of the pandemic, research suggests that students are one to two months behind where they should be in general reading skills, on average, and two to four months behind in broad math achievement. In both subjects, the students who are most affected are those in the lower grades. To address these gaps in learning, educators need a clear understanding of the skills that students are missing and the interventions they need for success.

For years, Decatur has utilized universal screening for all students in grades K-8 to identify those who need intervention. However, in light of the gaps in learning brought on by the shift to remote instruction, universal screening has become even more critical.

“We needed to see where our students were achieving and where they were falling behind,” says Assessment Administrator Teri Dyson. “It was important for us to get this information, so we could meet our students where they were and continue to move them forward.”

With Decatur school buildings still closed at the beginning of the 2020-21 school year, it meant that universal screening had to take place remotely for the first time. Pulling this off for more than 8,700 students across 17 buildings was like choreographing a Broadway musical. Yet, Decatur was able to do this successfully thanks to the hard work of faculty and staff—and with the help of FastBridge universal screening tools.

> "We needed to see where our students were achieving and where they were falling behind. It was important for us to get this information, so we could meet our students where they were and continue to move them forward."

Teri Dyson,
Assessment Administrator

Identifying Academic and Social-Emotional Behavior Needs During a Crisis

Decatur had switched to FastBridge as its universal screening platform a few years earlier. "We had been using NWEA's Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) before, but there were some pieces missing that we thought were important to implement in our district, such as behavior screening," Dyson says. "Also, the progress monitoring tools we have with FastBridge are not something we had access to through NWEA."

Both of those elements play an important role in the district's efforts to educate the whole child.

Decatur uses FastBridge's reading and math screening assessments, as well as the Social, Academic, and Emotional Behavior Risk Screener (SAEBRS) to gauge all K-8 students' SEB risk levels. All Decatur students are given an iPad for learning, and the SEB screening takes just one to three minutes per student on these devices. This helps schools address the critical SEB skills gaps that may be getting in the way of learning.

SEB screening is coupled with academic screening to ensure supports are aligned where students need them.

"We're not going to improve students' academic achievement if their minds aren't in the right place," says Jeff Dase, Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning.

In addition, the FastBridge platform provides comprehensive reporting on individual students, classes, grade levels, and schools, complete with suggestions for appropriate research-based academic interventions that teachers can use to close the gaps in students' skills. "We're not only able to get the data," Dyson says, "but we also have access to the next steps we should take based on this information." Teachers and administrators discuss this information in their PLCs and use it to plan both whole-class instruction and small-group and individual student interventions.

Despite the district's experience with FastBridge, the fall 2020 screenings marked the first time the process was done remotely.

"Each building was able to create its own schedule, based on what worked for local educators within our three-week testing window," Dyson says. "We did have some in-person meetings with students, but that wasn't always the case, so we also administered the tests virtually at all levels."

IMPLEMENTATION TIP

Decatur began universal screening during the second week of school. During the first week, the district trained teachers in how to administer the FastBridge screening virtually. The platform's flexibility and ease of use made this process fairly seamless.

> "We're not going to improve students' academic achievement if their minds aren't in the right place."
>
> Jeff Dase,
> Assistant Superintendent of
> Teaching and Learning

Remote Assessment and Parent Communication

By far, the biggest challenge in screening K-8 students remotely was being able to reach all students. "Many of our students come from single-parent families," Dyson says. "With parents working during the day and students being at daycare during school hours, we struggled with how to reach and support those students during testing."

Communication was essential to this process. District staff created form letters for parents within FastBridge, explaining how the testing would work, and teachers posted the letters on their Google Classroom pages. "We also made a lot of phone calls and sent a lot of emails to follow up with parents," Dyson says.

Another key challenge was ensuring that the screening data were reliable.

"We had some concerns about whether students might get help from a parent on the assessments, or whether they might not take their time and just click through quickly to get it done," Dyson explains.

Principals and other district leaders have looked through the data to identify where those issues might have occurred, using reports (such as the "Student at a Glance" reports within FastBridge) to help determine whether they have an accurate picture of each child's skills and abilities. In some cases, the district has retested students, although the vast majority of results were deemed accurate.

In addition, district leaders have had conversations with parents to explain the purpose of universal screening. "Educating parents on what we're trying to accomplish is important for getting reliable data," Dyson says. "We need to make sure they understand that we're using this information solely for instructional planning, so we know what we have to do to help their child advance."

IMPLEMENTATION TIP

There can be a lot of confusion around assessment purposes and the roles they play in driving instruction and intervention. Providing context can help ensure parents are partners in assessment, especially in remote or hybrid environments.

> "I love the s2i Report so much...It helps teachers make better instructional decisions by recommending exactly what students need."
>
> Teri Dyson,
> Assessment Administrator

Guiding Students' Success

Although Decatur Public Schools wasn't able to reach 100 percent of students with remote universal screening, the district did test the vast majority of children in reading, math, and SEB in fall 2020. "Our teachers are awesome," Dyson says, "and they're the reason we were able to pull this off."

Using the Screening to Intervention (s2i) Report from FastBridge, teachers now understand not only where each child's specific skills gaps are, but also what actions they should take to improve whole group instruction and to provide Tier 2 and Tier 3 intervention.

"I love the s2i Report so much," Dyson says. "It helps teachers make better instructional decisions by recommending exactly what students need."

Although 2020-21 wasn't a typical school year, FastBridge was instrumental in getting Decatur educators the information they need to guide their students' success.

Read the Full Decatur Public Schools Case Study

Decatur Public Schools uses FastBridge to support learning.
To learn more about the Illuminate Solution, reach out today.

Section 6: Equity & Disproportionality

DnA | FastBridge | eduCLIMBER | Achievement Dashboard

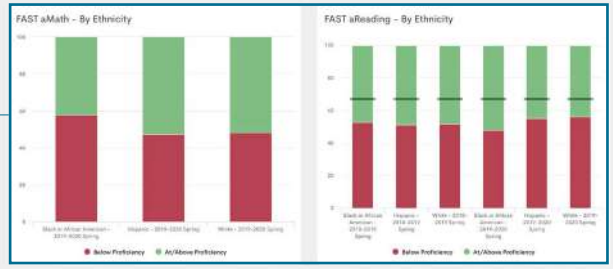
Illuminate provides data and tools to monitor for equity in daily practices and outcomes, identify areas of inequity and disproportionality, track progress in real time, and drive action and change.

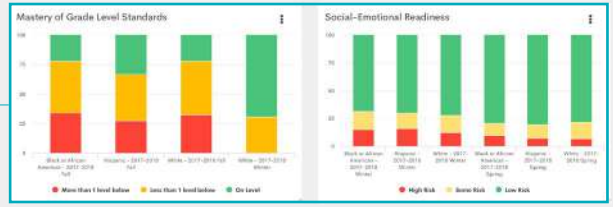
DISTRICT DASHBOARD

Who are our students?

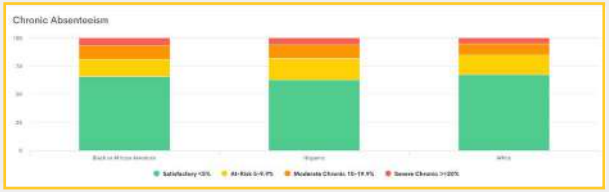
What students are in interventions?

How are students performing?





Are students coming to school?



Learn More About Illuminate's Equity & Disproportionality Solution

Warsaw Community Schools

Leverage assessment data to improve instruction and close achievement gaps

About Warsaw Community Schools

Warsaw Community Schools is a nationally recognized public school district in Kosciusko County, Indiana. The district includes 13 schools within the communities of Warsaw, Winona Lake, Claypool, and Leesburg. Its mission is to inspire and equip all students to continuously acquire and apply knowledge and skills while pursuing their dreams and enriching the lives of others.

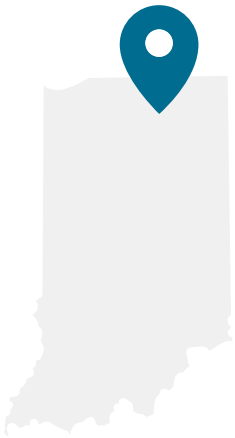
The district's strategic plan is built on four key pillars: (1) build and practice personal empathy; (2) equip students with adaptable life skills; (3) develop inclusive learning environments; and (4) connect students with real-world learning opportunities.

LOCATION

Warsaw, IN

NUMBERS

Students:	7,000
Staff:	1,200
Schools:	13



The Challenge

Like so many districts, Warsaw Community Schools grappled for many years with being data rich, but information poor. "We struggled with trying to make sense of all of our data," says Chief Analytics Officer Dr. Shelly Wilfong. "The district's prior efforts to use assessment data warehouses weren't successful. Teachers found these systems to be very complicated—and so they didn't end up using them." Although the district envisioned the ability to use assessment data to improve instruction, they were struggling to put that goal into practice.

Using DnA to Help Improve Instruction with Assessment

Today, Warsaw teachers are using DnA, combined with the Inspect item bank, to gather information about their students in a variety of ways. These include both formative and benchmark assessments, as well as end-of-unit exams.

Through DnA, pre-built assessments are available for teachers who don't have time to create their own. However, "we've found that more and more teachers are creating their own tests so they have control over what standards the tests focus on," Wilfong says. Teachers can go into an item bank and choose questions aligned with the standards they are looking to assess, or they can write their own test questions.

"That has been very empowering for teachers," Wilfong says, "because they have ultimate control over their tests and quizzes." Warsaw teachers appreciate the platform's flexibility. "They can use DnA for quick exit tickets, all the way up to interim assessments and final exams," Wilfong notes. "Teachers using Google Classroom can just click a button and the DnA assessment is linked to their Google Classroom page. It allows us to do as many assessments as we want."

Warsaw educators use DnA to create and administer a number of standards-based assessments, ranging from quick checks on learning to interim assessments.

Because the teachers find DnA user-friendly, Warsaw educators are administering formative, just-in-time assessments more often to gather valuable feedback that helps drive instruction. "DnA allows teachers to do this very easily, without spending a lot of time on the data collection," Wilfong notes. "Even our teachers who are a little nervous about using technology find that this tool is simple and straightforward to use." Teachers can also share the assessments they've created with one another, making the platform a very powerful tool for PLCs.

Empowering Action with Teacher-Friendly Reports

Being able to quickly and easily collect all kinds of information about what students know and can do is tremendous, but it doesn't get teachers very far unless they know how to interpret the data. This is another area where Warsaw uses DnA to support teachers, especially through the two "go-to" reports: the Response Frequency Report and the Matrix Report.

IMPLEMENTATION TIP

Once a teacher gives an assessment, the Response Frequency Report shows not only the number of students who answered correctly but also the number of responses for each incorrect answer for every individual question. Teachers can use this information to dive deeper into where students' misconceptions might lie. The Matrix Reports shows teachers at a glance which items (and standards) students got right or wrong.

Teachers and administrators can also create custom reports with no special knowledge required. For instance, Warsaw educators have created a custom report converting raw scores into scores on a scale of 0–3, color-coded so that teachers can see quickly which students still need help mastering which standards.

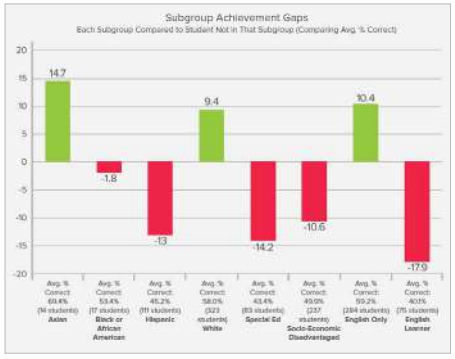
"I used to compile these types of reports in Excel, and it would take me a day or two to pull all of the information from multiple places," Wilfong recalls. "Now, I can do it with no coding or knowledge of Excel—and it takes me about 10 or 15 minutes. It's a huge time saver."

> "Now, more than ever, using actionable, student-centered data is critical to the success of all learners."
>
> Dr. Shelly Wilfong,
> Chief Analytics Officer

Promoting Equity By Examining Achievement Gaps

By examining data by different groups of students, Warsaw teams are also able to monitor for achievement gaps in their students' results in support of the district's mission for equity. "There is nothing more exciting for a teacher or administrator than when one can truly say all students are succeeding in learning," says Wilfong. "It is challenging under the best of circumstances. The pandemic makes the 'education debt' even greater. Now, more than ever, using actionable, student-centered data is critical to the success of all learners."

The data and reporting available in DnA enable educators to examine the data through an equity lens without spending valuable time compiling the data. "Graphs and charts give teachers a visual representation of the achievement gaps, helping to create meaning quickly," says Wilfong. "This can lead to critical conversations to address issues that may otherwise prevent certain groups from succeeding. Teachers will feel empowered when they can discuss concerns and make changes that impact student achievement."



DnA's Subgroup Achievement Gap Report provides instant feedback for classroom teachers on how students in various groups of students performed on an assessment.

When using pre/post assessments, a teacher can compare gaps that are identified on the pretest with the gaps that still remain on the posttest. The teacher can then determine if gaps are closing based on the data. Teachers can then use these data to make changes needed to bring about further improvement.

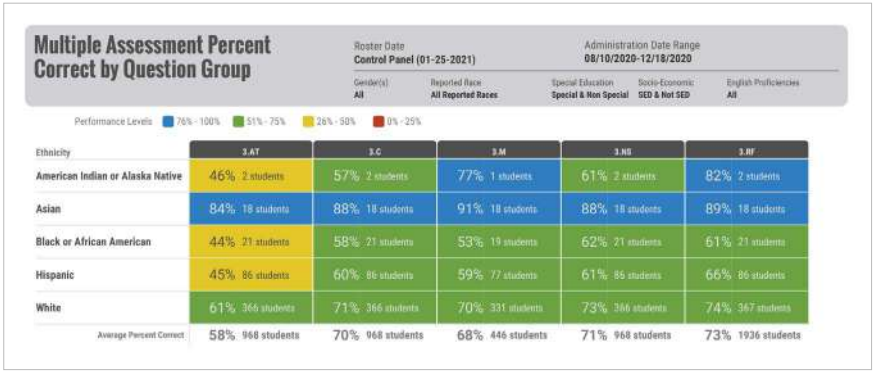
Anchoring equity-based conversations in data can keep them targeted and student-centered, and data visualizations can help reveal patterns that are otherwise hard to see.

Learn additional strategies for promoting equity in your school. Download our Increasing Equity & Empowering Change Playbook.

DnA also equips teams to examine patterns in performance and persistent gaps over multiple assessments. The Multiple Assessment Percent Correct by Question Group Report helps teachers take a more holistic approach of examining achievement over time and across various assessments to get a better sense of strengths and areas of need for different groups of students throughout the semester or year. Using this report, teachers and administrators have a better understanding of which standards have the greatest gaps among groups of students.

IMPLEMENTATION TIP

"Examining data by student group is a powerful way to start discussions around implicit bias and inequitable practices that may be present in the classroom," says Wilfong. "It helps clear the way for a better understanding of the struggles of certain groups. This work helps create conditions for teachers to discuss how they present information to students and assess student learning."



Multiple Assessment Percent Correct by Question Group

Roster Date: Control Panel (01-25-2021)
Administration Date Range: 08/10/2020-12/18/2020
Gender(s): All | Reported Race: All Reported Races | Special Education: Special & Non Special | Socio-Economic: SED & Not SED | English Proficiencies: All

Performance Levels: 76% - 100% | 51% - 75% | 26% - 50% | 0% - 25%

Ethnicity	3.AT	3.C	3.M	3.NS	3.RF
American Indian or Alaska Native	46% 2 students	57% 2 students	77% 1 students	61% 2 students	82% 2 students
Asian	84% 18 students	88% 18 students	91% 18 students	88% 18 students	89% 18 students
Black or African American	44% 21 students	58% 21 students	53% 19 students	62% 21 students	61% 21 students
Hispanic	45% 86 students	60% 86 students	59% 77 students	61% 86 students	66% 86 students
White	61% 366 students	71% 366 students	70% 331 students	73% 366 students	74% 367 students
Average Percent Correct	58% 968 students	70% 968 students	68% 446 students	71% 968 students	73% 1936 students

> "Examining data by student group is a powerful way to start discussions around implicit bias and inequitable practices that may be present in the classroom."

Read the Full Warsaw Community Schools Case Study

Warsaw Community Schools uses DnA, Inspect, FastBridge, eduCLIMBER, and Achievement Dashboard to support learning. **To learn more about the Illuminate Solution, reach out today.**

Shelby County Schools

Utilize universal screening to create a more equitable gifted program

About Shelby County Schools

Shelby County Schools is Tennessee's largest public school district and is among the 25 largest public school districts in the United States. It serves a very diverse student population: More than half of its students come from economically-disadvantaged families, about 8% have limited English proficiency, and 1%—or more than 1,000—are homeless.

Despite these challenges, the district has set very ambitious goals that 80% of students are college or career ready, 90% of seniors graduate on time, and 100% of graduates will enroll in a postsecondary opportunity. To reach these goals, the district focuses on five high-leverage areas in particular: early literacy; improvement of postsecondary readiness; developing strong teachers, leaders, and support staff; expanding high-quality school options; and working closely with families and community partners to support its schools.

LOCATION

Memphis, TN

NUMBERS

Students:	113,166
Educators:	8,869
Schools:	206

The Challenge

Shelby County's long-running gifted student program has been in place for more than 50 years. The program, called CLUE (which stands for "Creative Learning in a Unique Environment"), serves students from prekindergarten through high school. It aims to build the talents of every student who is achieving at a high level, and it does this through learning experiences based on characteristics, needs, abilities, and interests rather than on a predetermined curriculum.

Shelby County has a strong focus on equity of access. "When we're screening students for gifted services," says CLUE Supervisor Jennifer Chandler, "we not only look at students in general education; we also look at students who might have a disability and those who are in our English Learner program. We want to make sure that nobody falls through the cracks."

Despite this focus on equity, the district found that white and Asian students were vastly overrepresented in its gifted program in relation to their share of the overall student population, while Black and Latinx students were underrepresented. In the 2017-18 school year, 32 elementary schools—mostly in low-income neighborhoods—had no students recommended for gifted testing.

This reflects a common national trend. A 2018 study found that Black students accounted for 15% of the total student population nationwide, but only 10% of the students were enrolled in gifted programs. Latinx students made up 28% of the total student population, but only 21% of the gifted population. Students from high-income families are seven times more likely to be in gifted programs than other students with similar reading and math scores.

> "When we're screening students for gifted services, we not only look at students in general education; we also look at students who might have a disability and those who are in our English Learner program. We want to make sure that nobody falls through the cracks."
>
> Jennifer Chandler, CLUE Supervisor

Disproportionality in gifted education programs means that some students who are deserving of this opportunity are missing out—and research confirms there are many benefits to participating. For instance, students in gifted education programs are more likely to take advanced courses, have higher educational attainment, and experience social benefits as well.

"We had been relying on adults to recommend which students should be tested for inclusion in our gifted programs," Chandler says. However, many teachers and other adults aren't trained to recognize traits of giftedness, causing a referral-only process to yield an unreliable and incomplete candidate pool.

To make the screening process truly equitable, it was time for a different approach. District officials realized that universal screening would make the identification process more equitable; using objective data as the first step of screening removes any qualitative data that may be influenced by student behavior, appearance, or background.

The district had tried this before using NWEA's Measures of Academic Progress (MAP). However, the length of the assessment was causing testing fatigue with students, causing some to start answering questions quickly without thinking carefully about their responses. "The high-achieving students were taking much longer to finish their tests," says Chandler. "Even after an hour-long window, we had some students who had to come back to finish their test."

This not only caused frustration with students but also ultimately resulted in data validity issues. "It's really hard to get reliable data when the test is causing burnout," she observes.

Increasing Equity in Gifted Programs

IMPLEMENTATION TIP

The district's Response to Instruction & Intervention (RTI²) department was already using FastBridge to identify K-8 students in need of academic intervention. Chandler and her colleagues in the CLUE program discovered that they could use these same screening tools to identify students who might be gifted as well.

"We were able to look at the top end of the data to screen for our gifted program without adding another assessment to what the children already had to take," she says, "and this didn't cost us anything extra, either."

FastBridge screening assessments are brief, taking only about 20 minutes to complete—long enough to yield reliable data, and short enough to avoid testing fatigue with students. "This was encouraging for our gifted students, because it took the same amount of time for them to complete as everyone else," Chandler says. "They weren't still taking the test while their peers were at recess."

> In one year, we grew the program by nearly 900 students, or about 25%.

Using the FastBridge universal screeners to screen all students for inclusion in the gifted program has given Shelby County leaders valid data upon which to base their decisions about which students should be considered for gifted education—and this has made a tremendous difference. “In one year, we grew the program by nearly 900 students, or about 25%,” Chandler says.

In addition, the district increased its number of underrepresented students (Black and Latinx) at a higher rate than the overrepresented students. “That’s very exciting,” she adds, “and it shows that we’re on the right track.”

Now, every elementary school in the district has students receiving gifted services. “It’s not just about finding those individual kids,” Chandler says. “There’s a ripple effect. You start to see the school differently when you can say, ‘Yes, we serve gifted students in our school.’ It’s a win for more than just those kids. It’s a win for families, for schools, and for the community.”

By using FastBridge to increase the number of students identified as gifted, Shelby County is providing equitable opportunities for everyone. The district is also keeping more students engaged academically—while opening doors for their future.

“With a local enrichment program,” Chandler concludes, “we can expose children to academic vocabulary, academic knowledge, and different ways of thinking critically and creativity that are going to set them up for success.”

Universal screening assessments are given to all learners. This ensures all students have an opportunity to be identified for potential enrollment in gifted programming, even without an adult’s referral.

Shelby County's Success, by the Numbers

	GIFTED STUDENTS, AUGUST 2019	GIFTED STUDENTS, MAY 2020	DIFFERENCE	% INCREASE
ASIAN	252	321	+69	27.4%
BLACK	1,458	1,917	+459	31.5%
LATINX	326	419	+93	28.5%
WHITE	1,192	1,416	+224	18.8%
OTHER	171	244	+73	42.7%
TOTAL	3,399	4,317	+918	27.0%

Read the Full Shelby County Schools Case Study

Shelby County Schools uses FastBridge to support learning.
To learn more about the Illuminate Solution, reach out today.

Saint Paul Public Schools

Provide equitable support for students struggling to read

About Saint Paul Public Schools

As the second-largest school district in Minnesota, Saint Paul Public Schools (SPPS) leads by example. The district continuously strives to stay on the cutting edge of academics, searching for solutions to support its diverse population of over 35,000 students who speak more than 125 languages.

The Challenge

When Sue Braithwaite stepped into her current role at SPPS as a Supervisor of Literacy, she took on the challenge of improving district reading scores. Braithwaite recommended that SPPS adopt an assessment system to get data around what specific skills students were struggling with and why so that they could make more informed instructional decisions. Based on Braithwaite's thorough research, SPPS decided to adopt FastBridge, as it combines Curriculum-Based Measures (CBM) and Computer-Adaptive Tests (CAT) to support universal screening and progress monitoring.

LOCATION

Saint Paul, MN

NUMBERS

Students:	35,715
Staff:	2,545
Schools:	56

Implementing for Success

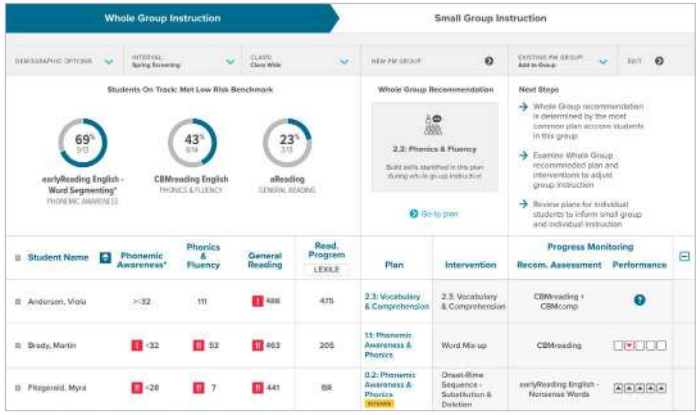
Because the implementation of any new program comes with a learning curve—and perhaps reticent new adopters—the district first introduced literacy leads and coaches and district leadership to the platform so that they could become familiar with it and confident in using the assessments. Once supervisors were trained, comprehensive teacher training was provided. At every step, the reason for implementing FastBridge was shared and educators were shown how the system can help inform and strengthen instruction.

IMPLEMENTATION TIP

Initially, SPPS only planned to use FastBridge for screening and progress monitoring in grades K-8. But after teachers and administrators asked to implement the system in 9th grade as well, and even in some 10th grade classes, use of FastBridge quickly grew. Today, more than 70% of SPPS students use FastBridge across all grade levels.

Using the Screening to Intervention Report to Inform Instruction and Intervention

The Screening to Intervention (s2i) Report was a key factor in securing teacher buy-in and has proven to be an essential tool in the district's decision making around student supports.



The s2i Report helps teachers identify which interventions are needed in mathematics and reading. In reading, the report utilizes CAT and CBM to provide insight into students' accuracy, automaticity, and broad reading skills. This data is supplemented with recommendations for instruction and progress monitoring based on each student's specific needs.

SPPS teachers said the s2i Report provides the exact data they had been looking for and "took the guesswork out" of Tier 1 instruction and intervention.

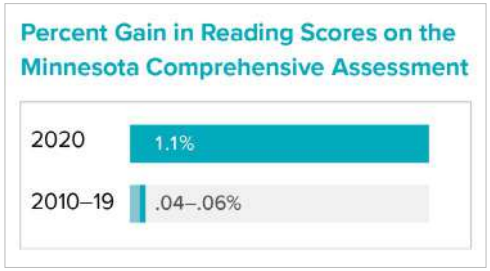
By using FastBridge's universal screening assessments and s2i Report, educators have deep insights into each and every student's reading mastery and specific skill gaps. Moreover, they have specific classwide, small group, and individual student recommendations for helping each reader succeed.

Using this one report, SPPS has made decisions that have improved instruction and student outcomes, including:

- Determining which students are struggling to read and in what areas interventions and targeted instructions should be applied.
- Using the data to inform professional development. Braithwaite regularly holds professional development opportunities around topics highlighted by FastBridge data. A recent optional event was highly attended by 128 educators.
- Rethinking staffing for intervention classes based on how many students require additional support.
- **Informing curriculum adoption. When it was time for the district to adopt a new reading curriculum, teachers knew from the s2i Report that they needed a curriculum that starts with phonics. When the staff pitched their program choice to administrators, they had data to support their selection.**

IMPLEMENTATION TIP

Using the Data to Move the Needle



The insights SPPS is gleaning from the s2i Report are making an impact. The district saw a 1.1% gain in reading scores on the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment last year, in which every racial group had growth. SPPS hadn't had gains in MCA reading scores since 2010, and even then, the growth was only between 0.04% and 0.06%. Braithwaite attributes both the improvement and higher rate of gain to the district's implementation of FastBridge and the use of its data.

In a challenging school year of competing priorities, making gains in reading scores may seem out of reach. But, the data to know where to make adjustments has never been more important. As Braithwaite says, "If you don't try, you're not going to know."

Learn additional strategies for building reading proficiency with all learners. Download our Putting the Science of Reading into Practice Playbook.

The district saw a 1.1% gain in reading scores on the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment last year, in which every racial group had growth.

Read the Full Saint Paul Public Schools Case Study

Saint Paul Public Schools uses FastBridge to support learning.
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Section 7: Consultative Services

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- BI Report Building Service

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Customized support from initial idea to final report card.

- Report Card Building

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Sonoma Valley Unified School District

[Advanced Features Setup] Fuel a data-driven MTSS with a customized early warning system

About Sonoma Valley Unified School District

Located about an hour northeast of San Francisco, Sonoma Valley Unified School District (SVUSD) is home to over 3,700 students. 61.1% of the district's student population is Hispanic and 32.8% is white. 62.7% of students are socio-economically disadvantaged, 27.2% are English Learners, and 15.5% are students with disabilities.

The district's goal is for all students to graduate ready for college or their chosen career. To realize this mission, SVUSD's leadership team partners closely with parents, staff, students, and the community to leverage challenging curriculum and differentiated instruction tied to rigorous grade-level content standards and research-based practices. To support student success, the district's leadership team prioritizes ongoing professional development for teachers, developing positive classrooms, and leveraging assessment to monitor student learning.

LOCATION

Sonoma, CA

NUMBERS

Students:	3,746
Staff:	420
Schools:	11

The Challenge

Like many districts, SVUSD is in the process of developing a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) to help drive decisions around supporting students' academic, social-emotional learning, and behavior needs.

In order to successfully develop and implement their MTSS, the district leadership team knew that they'd need to create two key structures: (1) data teams that meet regularly to analyze data and (2) easy access to holistic student data with easy-to-understand reports that help focus conversations around the most pertinent questions—without losing time to compiling the data.

To address the first need, the district is developing Instructional Leadership Teams (ILTs) at both the school and district levels. The goal for these teams is to engage teachers, principals, and other staff members in collaborative decision making around instructional actions. They will primarily focus on identifying trends at the district or school level to help guide universal supports where they're needed, as well as partner closely with the district's guidance counselors in driving supports at the individual student level.

To address the second component, they decided to implement an early warning system (EWS) to make data more actionable for their teams. "The EWS will facilitate easy access to student data across academics, social-emotional, behavior, and attendance," explains Dr. Charles Wilson, Director of Student Wellness Services and SAFE Sonoma Valley Grant. "It will also provide automation elements to help our teams know which data are most urgent to review."

The next step was to determine how to create their EWS in alignment with their unique needs and how to develop custom reports to drive meaningful conversations around student supports.

Using Illuminate's Advanced Features Setup Service to Create a Custom EWS

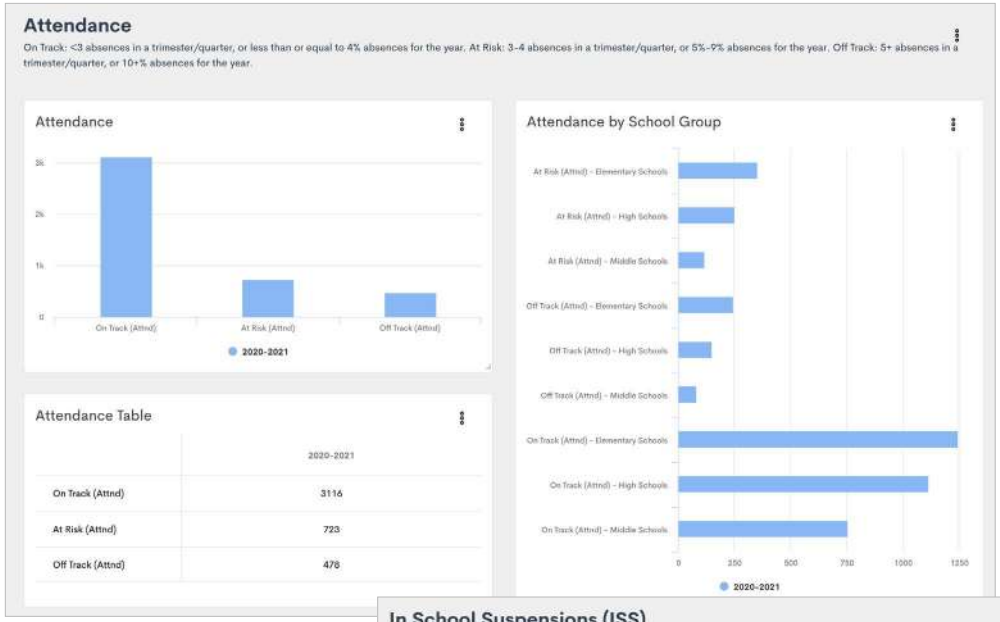
IMPLEMENTATION TIP

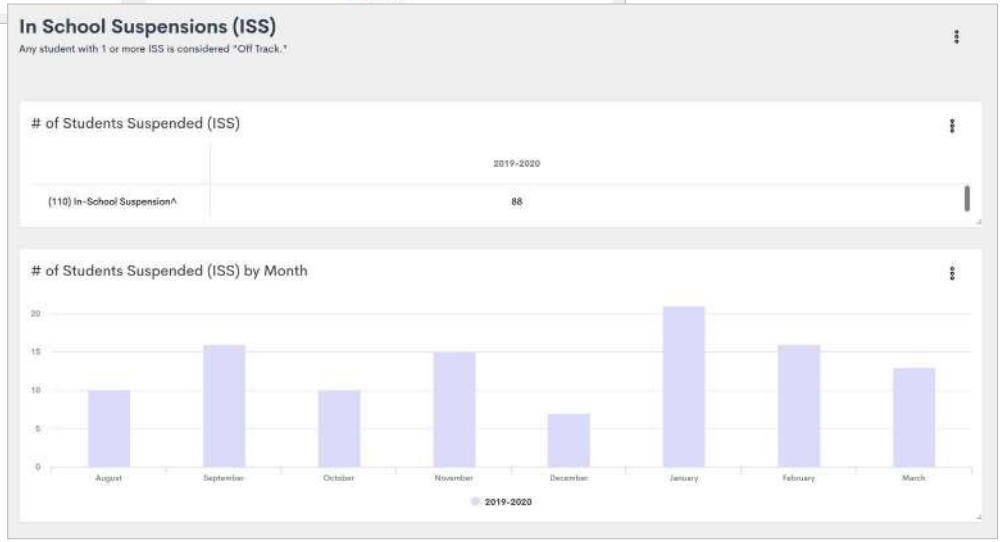
The SVUSD team decided to create their EWS using eduCLIMBER's Threshold feature. Teams can set "thresholds" across academic, behavior, attendance, and other data so that the right users are automatically notified as soon as a student meets a set of criteria.

To help with the development and refinement of those thresholds, the district has partnered with Illuminate's Advanced Features Setup team to not only configure the EWS but also design interactive, custom reporting to visualize the results. The Illuminate team collaborated with Wilson to develop an interconnected series of weighted thresholds that automatically identify and tag students as On Track or Off Track in various categories, using numerous data points and multiple criteria.

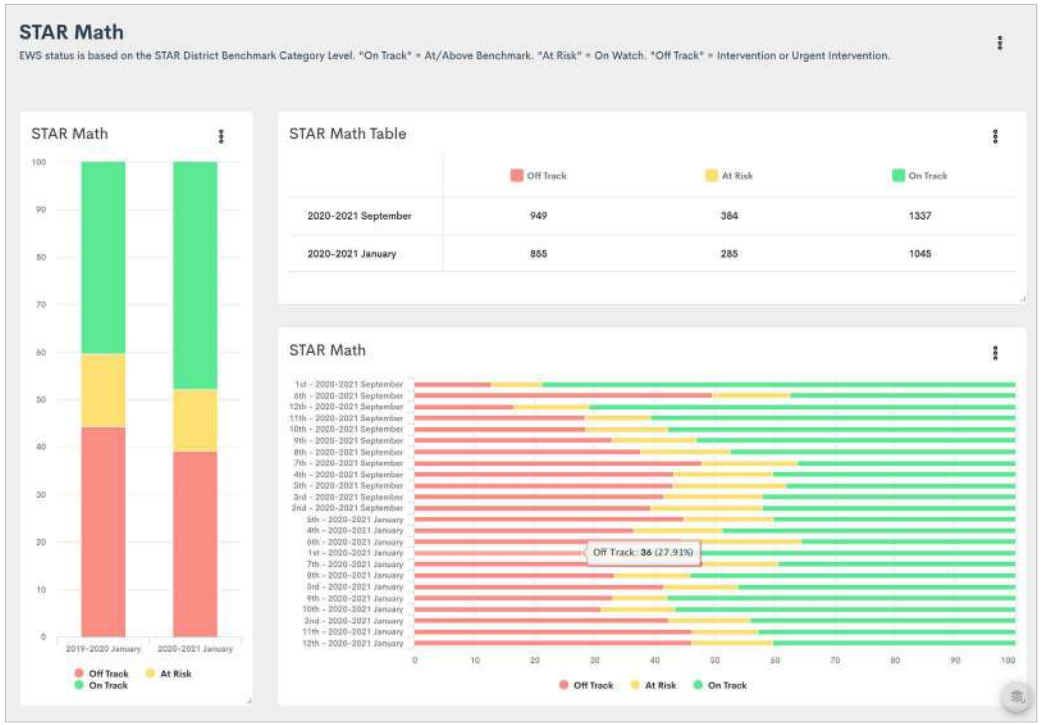
The Illuminate team then created a suite of interactive, custom reports in Achievement Dashboard to bring those EWS data to the surface. They help guide the right conversations for individual students, different student groups, grades and schools, as well as the whole student population.

For elementary, the district's EWS thresholds and reporting focus on course performance, attendance, office referrals, suspensions, and performance on some standardized measures.

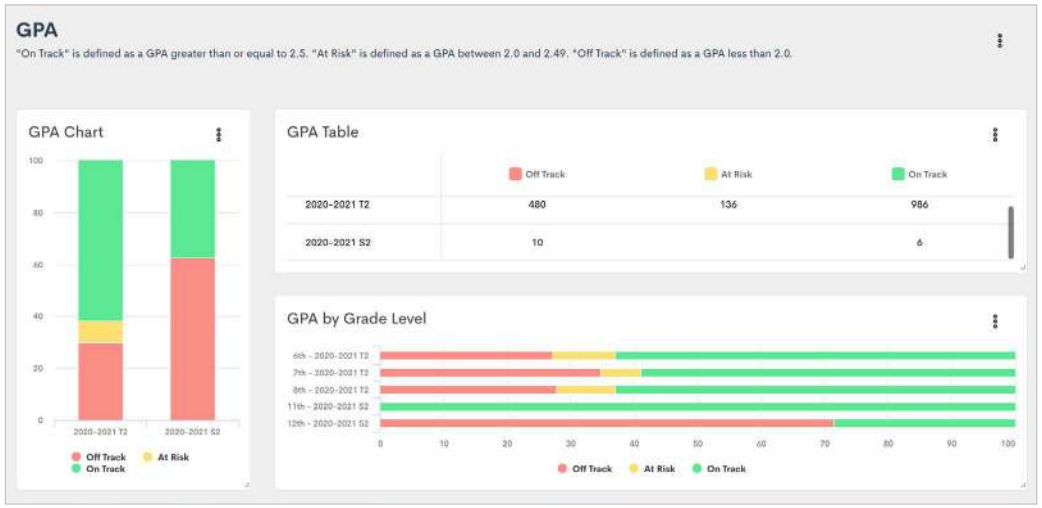




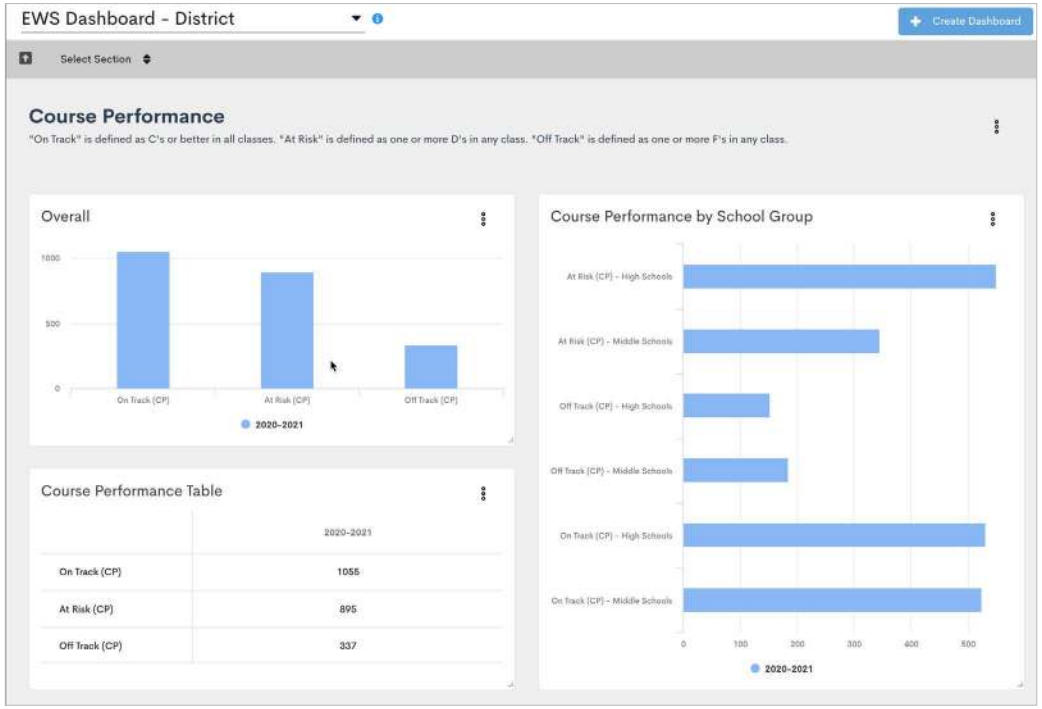
Many districts grapple with how to consistently bring the right data to the surface at the right time, especially when looking for patterns across data sources. Using an EWS can take a lot of heavy-lifting out of data triangulation and reveal insights in real time.



For middle school students, alerts and reports use all elementary factors along with GPA.



For high school students, the district monitors all middle school criteria as well as credits needed to advance to the next grade level.



With these key data all in one place—and interactive reports designed around the district's specific needs—Wilson shares that the ILTs and guidance counselors are able to more easily explore the intersections of data for students, grades, and schools.

"For instance, when analyzing data for our middle school students, we noticed that a significant number of students are performing below grade level in reading according to our standardized screener," says Wilson. "But when we look at the course performance for those same students in their English class, most of those same students are getting As and Bs." Equipped with this information, the district leadership can partner with classroom teachers to understand and address this need. But the misalignment might not have been detected without visibility into the data.

> "Without that visibility into improvement, the simple act of prescribing and implementing an intervention might not have meaningful impacts on student outcomes."

Dr. Charles Wilson,
Director of Student Wellness Services and SAFE Sonoma Valley Grant

Leveraging an EWS to Drive MTSS

By developing their EWS in eduCLIMBER, Wilson and his team also have the ability to connect those interactive reports to other built-in tools that further support their MTSS.

"In eduCLIMBER, we're able to record and track academic, social-emotional, and behavior interventions, including students' participation," explains Wilson. "We're also able to determine performance and evaluate the effectiveness of those interventions; if the first support we put in place isn't effective, we need an easy way to understand that that is the case so we can take a different approach to supporting the student. Without that visibility into improvement, the simple act of prescribing and implementing an intervention might not have meaningful impacts on student outcomes."

The district can also use eduCLIMBER's smartFORMs to house the intervention plans—a feature that can also support their Coordination of Services with 504 plans, the Student Support Teams, and other data teams in the district.

In this way, eduCLIMBER not only houses the district's EWS for need identification and evaluating effectiveness, but can also support workflows and next steps.

"For instance, one of the ways our team plans to use the EWS is to flag all secondary students who have received at least one D or F in a class," says Wilson. "Counselors will then be able to pull that data and develop success plans for each of the students on the list, enabling us to intervene at the end of the marking period—instead of waiting for the end of the semester."

eduCLIMBER becomes more than a place for all student data to live. It becomes a central hub for daily operations and workflows.

IMPLEMENTATION TIP

Driving Equity for All Students

Because the EWS shows data for all students with easy disaggregation abilities, it's also an important tool for ensuring equitable outcomes for their students.

The district's ability to track credit attainment for high school students is a significant equity piece for Sonoma Valley Unified. In California, the number of credits attained in high school impacts eligibility for state colleges, requiring 82 credits across specific categories.

"In analyzing our data, we found specific groups of students have been tracked out of classes that are needed for credit attainment and that those same students also weren't participating in AP coursework," observes Wilson. "This revealed an area of inequity to us. Our leadership team feels that it reflects an issue with the system—not an issue with the students—meaning that we need to change our system to better support equity in credit attainment as an important means to supporting equitable outcomes."

The EWS will give the district's leadership visibility into credit attainment and course enrollment throughout the year, while there's still time for them to proactively intervene when students show a credit deficiency.

"Our leadership team feels that it reflects an issue with the system—not an issue with the students—meaning that we need to change our system to better support equity in credit attainment as an important means to supporting equitable outcomes."

Read the Full Sonoma Valley Unified School District Article

Sonoma Valley Unified School District uses DnA, Inspect, eduCLIMBER, Achievement Dashboard, and Consultative Services to support learning. **To learn more about the Illuminate Solution, reach out today.**

Riverdale Joint Unified School District

[BI Tool Report Building] Unlock English Learner (EL) data to accelerate reclassification and align targeted supports

About Riverdale Joint Unified School District

Located approximately 25 miles southwest of Fresno, Riverdale Joint Unified School District (RJUSD) proudly serves a community that is both ethnically and culturally diverse. The district's student population is 77% Hispanic, 20% Caucasian, and 2% African American. Approximately 85% students receive free or reduced meals, and over 35% of students are English Learners (ELs).

Educators in RJUSD are dedicated to promoting superior academic, social, and personal skills and values with all students. The district is committed to affording opportunities for learners to lead productive and successful lives through good citizenship, community participation, and service.

LOCATION

Riverdale, CA

NUMBERS

Students:	1,559
Staff:	113
Schools:	4

The Challenge

When Brian Curwick initially joined Riverdale Joint Unified School District as Director of Instructional Services, one of his first tasks was to revise the district's English Learner Master Plan. This document is meant to be a full accounting of the district's practices to ensure the success of their English Learners (ELs), including instructional strategies, procedural details, and assessment tools. It also details how the district meets California's state requirements around EL reclassification.

The process of reviewing the state mandate specifications and RJUSD's existing Master Plan revealed two key insights to Curwick. First, that the data and processes encompassed by these documents could not live in the back of the filing cabinet. "If our Master Plan truly articulates how we support our ELs, all stakeholders need to readily understand what those supports look like," affirms Curwick. "At the time, that was not yet the case in our district."

Second, Curwick suspected that the complexity of the requirements and related decision making processes probably made it very difficult for teachers to make *meaning* of the data gathered with their ELs—a hypothesis that proved to be correct. He knew they needed a way to not only support educators through the process of reclassification, but also to help them use the data to visualize students' current strengths and needs to guide the right next steps, and ultimately, help ELs reclassify sooner.

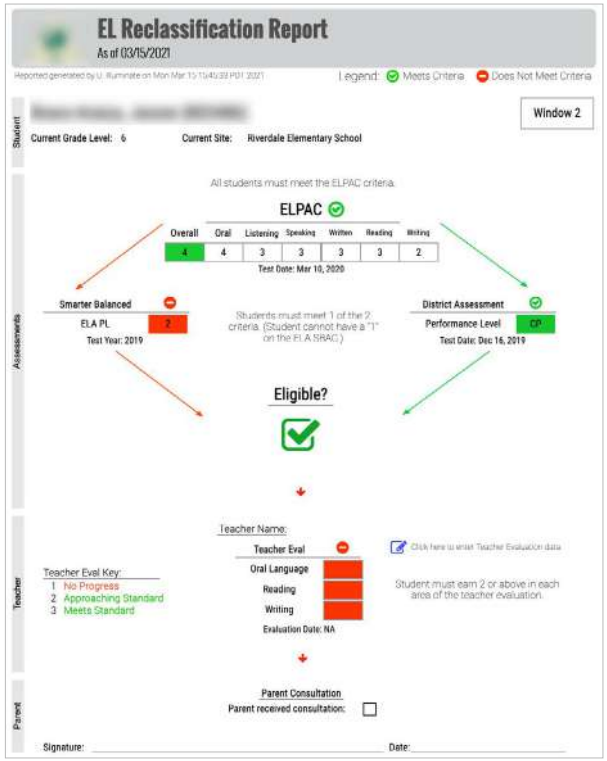
Developing a Meaningful English Learners (EL) Reclassification Report

Upon the recommendation of a colleague, Curwick decided to partner with Illuminate's Business Intelligence (BI) Tool Report Building Services team to do just that.

Over the years, Curwick and the Illuminate team have completed a few different iterations of the district's EL Reclassification Report in DnA. "Today, it's both a data report and a workflow tool," says Curwick. "It guides educators through the decision making process and drives instructional decisions."

The right visualizations can make complex processes easier to understand, and can actually guide educators through their decision making processes.

> "It guides educators through the decision making process and drives instructional decisions."
>
> Brian Curwick,
> Director of Instructional Services



In California, students are required to meet four criteria in order to reclassify. Some of those indicators are fixed, such as the English Language Proficiency Assessments for California (ELPAC) score. Some can be chosen locally by each district, such as how students are measured against their grade level peers in English Language Arts. The image on the left shows the first two criteria, which determine eligibility:

1. All student must meet the ELPAC criteria
2. All students must either a) receive a passing proficiency level on the state Smarter Balanced (SBAC) English Language Arts assessment or b) perform at grade-level on their FastBridge reading score, barring an ELA score of 1 on the SBAC

If the student meets those eligibility criteria, there are two other requirements:

3. Teacher evaluation, earning a 2 or above in each area of evaluation
4. Parent consultation

Curwick shares that this report has done a number of things for the district.

- It streamlines the data collection and helps educators see where, specifically, a student is struggling or not meeting the reclassification requirements. “Knowing where a student’s need exists helps educators meet the student where they are and provide impactful support that accelerates growth,” Curwick explains.
- **It helps teachers quickly understand their students’ current levels so they can create thoughtful student groupings in their classroom that bolster student success, whether grouping students across different levels or within similar levels.**
- It ensures that reclassification decisions are indeed based on the four criteria—not other factors, such as homework completion or engagement. “It’s not that those factors aren’t important to student success, it’s just that they *aren’t criteria for reclassification*,” explains Curwick. “Therefore, students shouldn’t be held back from reclassification based on those types of concerns; those issues should be addressed through other appropriate supports.”
- It helps teachers facilitate conversations with students to help them engage as stakeholders in their own data.

IMPLEMENTATION TIP

> Knowing where a student's need exists helps educators meet the student where they are and provide impactful support that accelerates growth.

Data Visualizations to Support RFEP 4 Year Follow Up Reporting

In addition to their EL Reclassification Report, the district worked with the Report Building Services team to also develop a Reclassified Fluent English Proficient (RFEP) 4 Year Follow Up Report. This report helps the district's principals monitor and track the progress of newly reclassified students, which the state mandates must be done for four years.

The report pulls together data for each of RJUSD's four RFEP Follow Up criteria: (1) GPA (2) District Assessment Level (3) CAASPP ELA Level, and (4) Attendance. It also automatically calculates whether adequate progress has been made, based on the district's unique cut points.


RFEP 4 Year Follow Up Report

Current Grade Level: 11 Current Site: [redacted] Redesignation Date: 2017-04-03 - Year 4

Time Since Reclassification Date: 3 year(s), 11 month(s), and 9 day(s)

2020-2021	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018
0.71 GPA	3.0 GPA	2.14 GPA	3.14 GPA
NA District Assessment Level	2 District Assessment Level	3 District Assessment Level	NA District Assessment Level
NA CAASPP ELA Level	NA CAASPP ELA Level	NA CAASPP ELA Level	2 CAASPP ELA Level
61 Attendance (Days Absent)	4 Attendance (Days Absent)	4 Attendance (Days Absent)	0 Attendance (Days Absent)
Adequate Progress?	Adequate Progress?	Adequate Progress?	Adequate Progress?
No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Parent Conference Date:	Parent Conference Date:	Parent Conference Date:	Parent Conference Date:
Intervention?	Intervention?	Intervention?	Intervention?
Principal Signature	Principal Signature	Principal Signature	Principal Signature
Teacher Signature	Teacher Signature	Teacher Signature	Teacher Signature

"The color coding in the report helps principals quickly understand which students are making adequate progress and who is not," observes Curwick. "Importantly, for students who are not progressing, the report helps our principals determine where specifically those supports should be aligned. It's an extremely efficient way to not only comply with RFEP accountability reporting requirements, but also drive meaningful support for the students who need them."

IMPLEMENTATION TIP

The report is designed to pull the most important information to the surface, so it's easy for principals to quickly understand what the visualization is saying.

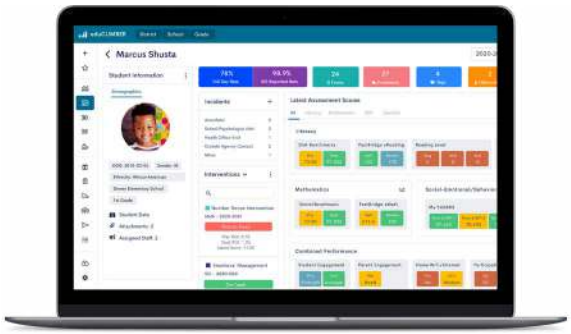
Read the Full Riverdale Joint Unified School District Article

Riverdale Joint Unified School District uses DnA, Inspect, FastBridge, and Consultative Services to support learning. **To learn more about the Illuminate Solution, reach out today.**

Conclusion

Data can't inherently improve student outcomes and experiences. The power lies in getting the right data into the hands of educators, combined with the right tools to make data part of decision making, collaboration, and system-level strategy and improvement. The educators featured in this resource show how quality assessments, tools, and visualizations help remove barriers so teachers can focus on what matters most: students.

To each and every Illuminator: We could not be more proud to support you and your critical work of teaching and learning. We hope that this playbook offers insight into the work of your colleagues across the country and sparks new ideas for using the tools you have today. To help make connections between the ideas in the articles and your own district or school, be sure to check out the Reflection Questions at the beginning of the playbook. If you have any questions, please reach out to your Customer Success Manager (CSM).



If you are not yet part of the Illuminate Education family, reach out today to learn how we can support your unique needs.

YOUR STORY MAKES A DIFFERENCE.

The strategies shared in this resource reflect the hard work and dedication of the educators we serve. If you're an Illuminate client and are interested in sharing your district's practices in a future playbook, please get in touch with us here.