



Wahoo Public Schools

An award-winning Nebraska district combines screening and progress monitoring assessments with an MTSS collaboration and management platform to make strategic, data-driven decisions around instruction, intervention, and staff supports.

OVERVIEW

District

Wahoo Public Schools

Location

Wahoo, NE

Numbers

Number of students: 1,070

Number of staff: ~73

Number of schools: 4

Illuminate Education Customer Since

2018

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.

MTSS as the Glue that Holds Everything Together

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

So, Snyder and other district leaders set out on a mission to find an assessment tool that could provide the depth and breadth of data they needed to assess student growth, guide impactful student supports, and make smart decisions for students and schools.

The district ultimately decided to pilot [FastBridge](#), a universal screening and progress monitoring solution from Illuminate Education, in half of Wahoo’s elementary schools for the 2018–19 school year.

“When we stopped using DIBELS, we didn’t have any type of curriculum-based measures in place at our elementary schools,” Snyder said. “We piloted FastBridge, and received great feedback from staff, who said the usability of the system and data it provided was tremendous.”

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Striving for Implementation Success

Prior to rolling out FastBridge across the district, Wahoo Public Schools sought feedback from stakeholders and worked to gain buy-in before implementing any changes. Taking a methodical approach to implementation has been a huge factor in the district's success.

"Any time you're considering change, people are likely to be on different sides of the fence," Snyder said. "There's people who are excited about the potential for change, some who are hesitant and at times, a group that's resistant to any change. We're very fortunate that our staff is committed to student success and 'inspiring our students to thrive' each and every day!"

“ The teacher and student screening tools have really helped us to identify needs and address potential crises throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. ”

Today, the district is using FastBridge to facilitate universal screening, conduct [progress monitoring](#), and determine targeted interventions. The assessments are providing 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) tool, educators have both academic and SEB data to fuel their MTSS decision processes.

"The teacher and student screening tools have really helped us to identify needs and address potential crises throughout the COVID-19 pandemic," Snyder shared.

Staff is 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 tool 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.”

Central Hub for MTSS Processes

To further strengthen its MTSS, Wahoo Public Schools implemented Illuminate’s [eduCLIMBER](#), an MTSS collaboration and management solution, during the 2020–21 school year.

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.

“eduCLIMBER allows us to access data consistently and in a timely manner, which can be used to inform the practices we have in place.”

“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.”

Staff members use eduCLIMBER’s 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.

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

Having a “home base” for its MTSS has helped to encourage usage of the tools across the district. It's also making teachers' jobs easier.

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

Using Dashboards to Bring the Big Picture Together

Lastly, Wahoo Public Schools leverages eduCLIMBER's real-time dashboard tool, 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).

Using eduCLIMBER's dashboards, 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.

“eduCLIMBER 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 eduCLIMBER's dashboards for that purpose moving forward. We're also using dashboards to put together action plans.”

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Achieving MTSS Success

Used together, Illuminate Education's FastBridge and eduCLIMBER solutions are streamlining key processes in their MTSS and enabling faster, more targeted data-driven decision making at the district, classroom, and student levels.

By combining FastBridge and eduCLIMBER, 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.



Reach out to learn more about FastBridge and eduCLIMBER
or to [schedule a demo](#).

