

Outsourced Educational Technology Management

Discover how top school districts are advancing 21st century learning.



With Questeq, advancements in a district's use of technology to boost personalized student achievement and growth are possible regardless of the district's transformation starting point.



Accurate Data Reporting Allows Districts to Capitalize on Entitled Subsidies (and more).

Challenge

Long gone are the days where a district can create its own Free and Reduced Lunch tally and other reporting to obtain federal and state subsidies. Now only raw data is submitted and the state information management system uses multiple data crosschecks to generate and publish reports that determine millions of dollars in subsidy funding—often with results that are different from those anticipated.

Action

The Questeq onsite data staff evaluated and reconciled discrepancies between internal school software and the reports generated by the state. A key to improving the data reports is training and education for these administrative assistants and administrators (a new team) so that data will be entered accurately and updated within a time frame that avoids discrepancies—assuring the planned subsidies based on this data are realized.

Results

Accurate reporting in these PA districts earns all the entitled subsidies with few/no surprises. State Auditor General reports will find that these districts have complied with all state laws and administrative achievements. And, the data reported to the state's Department of Education site—used often by the public when considering a move into the district—puts forward a realistic picture of the district with no surprises.

Learning from Multiple PA School Districts

This case study shares lessons learned from improved data management and reporting as part of educational technology management outsourcing in multiple PA districts.

Behind-the-scenes there are a few main lessons that may benefit all districts:

- 1. Creating a separate data team and properly training them on ever-changing data reporting standards will set a successful plan in motion.**
- 2. Discrepancies resolved by those teams can serve as useful lessons-learned to ensure that planned district subsidy funding (based on district data) are realized.**
- 3. Ensuring that all district educators, IT team and administrative personnel support the data team will help realize the long-term goal of using data to enhance student achievement.**

The Rest of the Story

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1. Creating a separate data team and properly training them on ever-changing data reporting standards will set a successful plan in motion. 2. Discrepancies resolved by those teams can serve as useful lessons-learned to ensure that planned district subsidy funding (based on district data) are realized. 3. Ensuring that all district educators, IT team and administrative personnel support the data team will help realize the long-term goal of using data to enhance student achievement.

Lessons-Learned from Discrepancies that Impact Operating Budgets

With proper training the district teams have dramatically improved the accuracy of data submitted. Now planned subsidy budgets are the same as actual budgets. And, now the data published about the district are free of embarrassing discrepancies with district reported data. Here are some of the lessons-learned from these discrepancies:

Data Discrepancy	Implications / Lessons-Learned
Graduation rates were reported lower by the state.	Incorrect grade 9-entry date, plus not correctly reporting student graduations from satellite schools, resulted in lower graduation rate on state reports.
District missed Individual Education Plan (IEP) subsidies for special education students.	State law requires that schools provide coverage for IEP students to age 21. When the district showed the students as graduating at 18, they were losing subsidies.
District received fewer subsidies for free and reduced lunches.	Discrepancies between administrative reports and food service generated reports resulted in incorrect subsidies (now repaired).
District was improperly reporting Vocational-Tech students and was planning on receiving subsidies the state data did not allow.	The district was incorrectly reporting Vo Tech students as 100% membership when students were only attending for 1/2 day which results in 50% membership for those students.
District was indicating a more senior/experienced staff on the school performance profile.	While more experience can be better, by not properly removing retired teachers from the system the district appeared to have a staff that was more senior than they would have liked.

Turning Data Into Higher Achievement

Simply improving data integration for "School Start-up Systems", those programs that need to be updated for every student every year before school starts, teachers are able to use these programs immediately to improve individual student achievement. Future plans call for curricula and culture changes to allow educators to use data from standardized tests and classroom diagnostic tools in near real-time to further enhance individual student achievement.

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These districts are gradually focusing on professional development and culture changes needed so that data can be used to create individual lesson plans that help turn data into higher student achievement.

