



College Community Improves Classroom Decision Making

In 2001, College Community School District in Cedar Rapids, Iowa selected Infinite Campus® as its new student information system. The district wanted a system to help them understand individual student achievement at both the district and classroom levels. Now, eight years later, College Community has experienced improved educational decisions, changes in professional learning communities, and an increase in overall achievement scores.

Changing the Model

College Community's previous student information system was decentralized, making it difficult to aggregate data for good decision making. It provided building-by-building data instead of being managed in one database.

"We were concerned about the reliability of the information we were receiving," said Craig Barnum, director of information services. "We weren't always sure we were comparing apples to apples, which led us to spend a lot of time assembling and confirming that the data was correct before using it to make decisions."

Infinite Campus brought a strong integrated data system to the district, with an architecture that touched on every level of the administrative focus: district-wide, school-wide, and classroom-level. Its flexibility gave College Community a powerful tool for the direct implementation of data in the ways in which it approached educating its students.

College Community leaders can obtain an accurate and cohesive picture of the entire district without manually aggregating data. These leaders no longer have to wait for "reporting time," but can retrieve a snapshot of the data at any time.

"With Infinite Campus, we are certain the data is accurate, and it provides our decision makers with the most current data available" said Barnum. "And after so many years of using Infinite Campus, it is the foundation to everything we do. So much is driven by some type of data and most of our data triangulates its way back into Infinite Campus."

College Community has worked hard to maximize the breadth and depth of all that Infinite Campus has to offer to drive decisions within the district.

Empowering Teachers

College Community teachers can now make important classroom decisions more quickly. Data that would normally have taken weeks to assemble are now available instantly, which leads to responsive adjustments in teaching.

Beyond basic classroom data, there is also extensive comparative data available to teachers. Infinite Campus organizes even these robust data sources, and allows teachers to base their educational choices on the information these data sources provide. "There is data from NWEA, and diagnostics like basic reading inventory (BRI) representation," Barnum explains. "Infinite Campus displays that information on the teacher's class roster and teachers use it to inform individualized instruction."

If a student needs intensive assistance, teachers can look in the system to get the data to build an intensive assistance plan, or on the other end of the spectrum, to build the ELP or talented and gifted plan.

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4,000 Students

Barnum explained, “Infinite Campus gave us a concise way for teachers to better understand their classroom and individual student needs. We can match test records to each student with a unique student ID number, allowing the teacher to evaluate the student progress.”

To ensure that all teachers make use of the broad range of student data, College Community requires them to use Infinite Campus. “Every teacher in the district uses the grade book,” said Barnum. “That is non-negotiable. We house all of our assessment data in Infinite Campus, so teachers have assessment and achievement data at their fingertips.”

Using information to inform classroom instruction has been happening at College Community since they first started using Infinite Campus in 2001.

Assessing Professional Development

Once the teacher had access to student information, the district realized it needed to radically change the way it viewed professional development. How could it make the instructional changes to use data most effectively?

College Community decided to move away from the classic professional development model used for its staff. Typically this involved having a teacher sit in a classroom and listen to an expert on a particular topic. The district determined it would be best to set up a program that would embed professional development and learning into teacher and staff daily activities.

“We needed our staff to be focused on their daily practices and their professional development to be driven by what was going on in the classroom,” said Barnum. “We felt our staff should be coaching each other, developing best practices and sharing effective learning plans.

College Community restructured its school day by moving the starting time 15 minutes later each day. This provided almost an hour before school started for teachers to collaborate and undertake personal professional development activities.

These changes in professional development and the management of student achievement data within Infinite Campus provides College Community with a tool to measure how each teacher is performing in a classroom. It also helps the district work with the teacher to perform their best while ensuring students receive an excellent education.

“We have pried the doors off the classroom, so to speak, by encouraging this collaboration amongst our teachers and publishing the results on the Campus Portal for our patrons,” said Barnum.

Strong Return on Investment

After eight years, Barnum sees how Infinite Campus saves time and money in the process of collecting and reporting data, which is a huge benefit to the district. “In the state of Iowa we have to deliver just over 100 unique data elements for every child, and we have to report these three times a year. With Infinite Campus, I know we’ve saved enormous amounts of money just in terms of administrative overhead.”

Beyond the benefits of saving time and money, the investment in the students’ education is also yielding rewards. College Community has seen a steady increase in its Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) scores over the past 10 years. Between the 2002 to 2008 school years, there was a significant achievement above Iowa’s standard proficiency set for NCLB.

College Community ITBS/ITED proficiency percentages are listed in the chart below.

College Community ITBS/ITED Proficiency Percentages						
	4th Grade Math	8th Grade Math	11th Grade Math	4th Grade Reading	8th Grade Reading	11th Grade Reading
2002	78.3	76.7	75.6	76.5	77.0	75.3
2008	88.0	83.9	82.3	86.1	80.6	80.3

“Once again, it ties back to Infinite Campus. The gains are not going to occur if teachers do not know from where they are starting,” said Barnum. “We certainly couldn’t have implemented a new professional development model and achieved these higher test scores without Infinite Campus.”

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About Infinite Campus

For more than a decade, Infinite Campus has successfully implemented its solutions for customers of all sizes. Today, Infinite Campus applications manage more than 4 million students in 42 states. Infinite Campus customers range from districts with fewer than 100 students to those with more than 100,000 as well as regional consortia, state departments of education and the federal government.