



Shenendehowa Empowers Decision Makers Through Data Analysis

Shenendehowa Central School District, located in New York State’s Capital District, needed a data management system for its 12 schools that could keep pace with changes in educational accountability requirements, increase teacher effectiveness and improve student learning practices through data analysis. Since 2006, Shenendehowa has used Infinite Campus to support decisions made throughout the district and within the classroom.

Time for a Change

For nearly twenty years, Shenendehowa used a DOS-based legacy system created by a consortium of districts to manage district data needs. Not only was the quantity and quality of the information strictly limited by the parameters of the system, but a specialized staff was required to generate paper reports.

Describing their previous student information system (SIS), Robert W. Melia, Shenendehowa Assistant Superintendent for Management Services and Quality Control, says, “Virtually no data was electronically exportable. The reports that were available were limited in scope and presentation. We were unable to keep pace with new state and federal data reporting requirements.”

In a data-rich world, reporting accountability creates new challenges for educators. Shenendehowa personnel must analyze volumes of information and generate a variety of accurate and timely reports including NCLB, New York’s Grade 3 through 8 testing program and the Regent’s Exams. The legacy system made this difficult. Because Infinite Campus is a web-based, integrated solution, it allows Shenendehowa staff to gather, analyze data and produce reports with a key stroke.

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Robert W. Melia
Assistant Superintendent for Management Services and Quality Control
Shenendehowa Central School District

Data Analysis and Decision Making

Apart from the necessary reports to state and national educational systems, Shenendehowa teachers and administrators find opportunities for improving their student’s learning experience and streamlining administrative operations.

“Because virtually all information is accessible in a canned report, ad hoc filter or a cube, Infinite Campus provides our staff with a wide range of data gathering and analysis options,” says Melia. “We are able to easily understand attendance trends, monitor student discipline patterns, evaluate student health data, control class size and adjust curriculum from scores on local, state and national assessments.”

Using Infinite Campus, Shenendehowa is able to use data for effective decision-making systems such as:

- A detailed district dashboard centering on student achievement
- School success summaries for each building providing quarterly updates on academic, mobility, stability and communication data
- District- and school-based data teams to analyze and respond to data
- A series of different “data looks” for schools based on federal accountability categories

Recently formed district teams analyze and evaluate data from sources such as national, state and school assessments to examine evidence of student learning. After thorough analysis, district decisions on goals, objectives, and action plans are communicated to the schools. A data analysis calendar is created to identify who, when, and how data will be evaluated in each school and an action plan is finalized by the end of October.

Shenendehowa Central School District
Robert W. Melia
Assistant Superintendent for Management Services and Quality Control
Clifton Park, New York
10,000 Students

Implementing District Goals

Teachers embed district strategies into classroom instruction through curriculum mapping, pacing guides, individual lesson plans, performance tasks and authentic assessments. Results of the assessments are entered into Infinite Campus, closing the feedback loop and providing administrators with real-time information necessary for sound decision making.

“Infinite Campus gives us the tools to manage information necessary to improve school performance and reinforces connections throughout the district,” says Melia.

Empowerment Through Access

In any school environment, data availability is critical. Recognizing the worth of the aphorism “access replaces dissemination”, Shenendehowa relies on Infinite Campus to empower its entire staff.

Campus Messenger allows instant communication among administrators, faculty and parents on issues of importance. Administrators can notify parents about attendance or behavior issues. Teachers can send information regarding student performance. Parents are alerted to district and school activities and become active participants in the educational process of their children. Collaborative decision making empowers all the stakeholders involved in the process.

“Each of us, as individuals, takes a leadership role in improving student achievement,” says Melia. “We strive to use quantitative and qualitative data to enhance curriculum and instruction to improve student learning.”

Infinite Campus provides access to information by all district stakeholders. Data is available on any computer with Internet capability. All Shenendehowa’s 5,000 students in grades 6 through 12 have Campus Portal accounts. Nearly 80 percent of district students from K12 have at least one parent with a portal account.

The newly created school-based data teams, together with academic departments, building teams and grade-level staff, will conduct a monthly review of student success to target areas for reinforcement and consistent practice. Schools examine multiple measures of data such as grades, behavior, attendance, and common assessments and give district-wide updates on how they are meeting goals.

“In an effort to improve student success in our classrooms and our schools, we must create data literacy for each individual,” says Melia. “Collectively, we then create a data culture for our grade levels, teams, departments and schools.”

Sharing a Vision

Believing that Shenendehowa’s successes are important to the educational community, Melia shares his vision of effective data analysis at New York conferences such as the School Administrators Association of New York (SAANYS) and the Data Analysis Technical Assistance Group (DATAG).

Addressing the importance of Infinite Campus functionality, Melia says, “Minimally, data can help us sharpen our focus, assign or reassign our resources and, along the way, improve our communication. The end result will be an identified set of best practices, insight into where gaps in learning and curriculum exist and opportunities to design plans to help students be successful in our increasingly interdependent world.”

Melia sees a successful future for Shenendehowa and its partnership with Infinite Campus. His vision is demonstrated in his presentation, Learning Cycle for Student Success, which highlights using data to inform instruction, curriculum design, assessment and a focus on professional development for continuous improvement in their schools.

Describing the potential of this vision, Melia says, “The creation of a data culture, in conjunction with Infinite Campus, places us on the cusp of using all of our incredible talents and resources in a more focused and organized way which will provide opportunity and success for our students.”

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 43 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.