

Des Moines Gains Immediate Benefits With Infinite Campus

Des Moines Public Schools (DMPS), the largest district in Iowa with more than 30,000 students, needed to upgrade its 11-year-old student information system (SIS). Its legacy system required a patchwork of other programs to accomplish basic tasks, such as customized reporting, attendance, security, parent communications and teacher access. Infinite Campus, as a web-based, integrated system, gave DMPS the ability to create custom reports, increase teacher access to information and improve parent communication.

Internal Communication Streamlined

At DMPS, accurate and timely internal reports are essential. Before Infinite Campus, canned reports were prepared at the district level and then sent to each school. This was time consuming, had potential for errors and did not ensure the end-user received what they really needed.

“Now users can create personalized reports appropriate for their building or program without calling the central office,” said William Schoenenberger, DMPS Director of Technology. “Our users can easily access data, analyze it and have a faster turnaround to make informed decisions.”

External Reporting Secure

Student information must be treated confidentially, while making appropriate data available at both the district and state level. DMPS wanted to create custom tabs so information could be tailored to the needs of the end-user to improve efficiency. Through Infinite Campus, a select user group may enter information and another restricted group can access this information as a read-only file or not at all.

“The Iowa Department of Education requires tracking of incidents of bullying and harassment. We needed to restrict access for input and analysis to specific staff groups,” said Schoenenberger. “With Infinite Campus, the ability to create a custom tab and use tools to control access was quick and easy to modify.”

Improve Classroom Decisions

DMPS understands that having student data easily available helps teachers make good classroom decisions. As a web-based, integrated system, Infinite Campus gives teachers real-time data access from anywhere, at any time. Teachers are kept informed about behavior, health, and attendance issues, and have tools to increase parent communication and the ability to create and analyze appropriate reports.

As DMPS continues to grow, training for new hires and advanced skill sets needs to be ongoing to maximize teacher and staff efficiency.

“Staff development is continuous at DMPS,” said Schoenenberger. “Teacher coaches have training at least once a year to keep updated on changes in the system or in policies and procedures that affect the use of Infinite Campus. Additional trainings continue to improve such things as data analysis skills and communication via the Campus Portal.”

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Increase Participation

Prior to having the Campus Portal, parents and students were limited to telephone, backpack notices and personal visits with teachers and counselors to learn about grades, assignments, and school notices. Infinite Campus makes student and school information available to any family with Internet access.

“Parents and students are now using Campus Portal, a feature we did not have with our old system, to view school messages, retrieve assignments and grades, check homework and monitor progress,” said Schoenenberger. “In addition, some students are able to select courses for the following year online, which improves the scheduling process.”

Messaging Available to All

Before Infinite Campus, DMPS licensed a message calling service used only at the high schools. The absence of efficient communication for middle and elementary schools wasted time and money, as well as created a potentially hazardous situation for students and staff alike.

DMPS purchased Campus Messenger with Voice to deliver regular, content-rich communications via e-mail or phone, for regular or emergency notifications. Because it is integrated with the Infinite Campus data, it accesses real-time contact information for the most reliable and efficient communications.

“With Campus Messenger with Voice, all schools can send standard attendance messages as well as custom or emergency notices,” said Schoenenberger. “It is a ‘must have’ in today’s educational environment.”

Implementation - A Team Effort

As a larger district with employees at 70 sites, DMPS faced many hurdles in implementation, including students receiving instruction at more than one facility, schools within the district operating on different calendars and offering a wide variety of special programs.

“Our district needed a plan that allowed staff to be trained in waves and to create support levels for each building,” says Schoenenberger. “The expertise of Infinite Campus project management and training personnel provided the guidance we needed to successfully make the transition from the old system to Infinite Campus.”

Road Map to Success

Infinite Campus has put a wealth of information into the hands of end-users at DMPS. Reporting is efficient and secure. End-users can directly access information for improved communication. Staff members generate reports without central office assistance. Successful data management is the payoff from planning and training through Infinite Campus.

“Infinite Campus has opened the door for data-driven decision making in our district,” says Schoenenberger. “More information is available at appropriate levels than ever before. The ability to customize has allowed us to truly see the student as a whole. It is taking DMPS to the next level.”

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.