Mainland Regional High School

LINWOOD, NEW JERSEY / 1,400 STUDENTS

Over the course of using PowerSchool for seven years, Mainland Regional High School (Mainland) tolerated many system-related challenges, including: over-complicated reporting, infrequent and useless updates, and state reporting that never worked. With Infinite Campus, those challenges are distant memories. Mainland now has a user-friendly, intuitive and continually-evolving SIS that enables them to do things better and faster.

A "Power" Failure

In the fall of 2013, a power outage took down the school's data center. Mainland's IT Director contacted Pearson, which assigned an engineer to rebuild the district's database.

"We were swimming along nicely from September through November, thinking we had backups that were going to work…right up until they failed," said Bill Kelly, Mainland's School & Student Information Manager.

According to Kelly, the engineer didn't set the data prompts correctly, triggering a prolonged period of broken promises and worse, increasingly stressed stakeholders.

Kevin Burns, Mainland's Assistant Principal, referred to the entire ordeal as a nightmare. "For months Pearson

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Kevin Burns
Assistant Principal
Mainland High School

said, 'we're going to look at it' but then another month would go by!" said Burns. "Meanwhile, the pressure was really building on everyone to access data and grades. The moment we needed Pearson to step up and say, 'We got you and we're going to take care of it,' they weren't there. We ended up paying a different company thousands of dollars to recover as much information as possible from the system."

At that point, Mainland envisioned a new SIS in its future. As for which SIS, they merely looked in their past.

Better Late than Never

Mainland used SASI until it was purchased by Pearson in 2007. Soon after the acquisition, Kelly said the district looked at about 15 potential vendors. "Infinite Campus was our first choice back then," said Kelly. "However, our administration was into cost-cutting and Pearson offered free implementation. Picking Pearson, unfortunately, just came down to finances."

In early 2014, Mainland re-connected with Dave Million, Senior Application

About Campus

▶ We are the largest American-owned student information system. Campus applications manage 7 million students in 43 states.

Specialist, at Custom Computer Specialists, Inc. (Hauppauge, New York). Custom is an Infinite Campus Channel Partner that provides sales and service in New Jersey and eight other northeastern states.

"We worked with Dave seven years earlier so it was great he was still on staff when we reached out," said Kelly. "We signed the contract in May, fast-tracked the implementation and went live in July. Dave and Custom were great to work with and smoothly got us up and running with Infinite Campus. It only took us seven years to come to our senses!"

The Main Difference: Logic

"The main difference between PowerSchool and Infinite Campus is that there's so much logic built into Campus," said Burns. "Every field is somehow tied to some other field so when I run reports, the system looks at different tables and gives me exactly the information I want. Infinite Campus just does what you think it should do…it just works."

Kelly commented that state reporting is now very simple for Mainland, and that wasn't the case with PowerSchool. "In seven years, the state reporting never, ever worked," he said. "I became very proficient at doing exports and excel tricks for state reporting. Now with Infinite Campus, for the first time ever, I can do the New Jersey extracts and they work!"

Updates...Yet Another Upgrade

"In the last few years, PowerSchool only made a handful of updates and when they did, they interfered with our customizations," said Burns. "With Campus, we receive very useful updates every month and never has an update caused us problems."

Infinite Campus has more than 150 in-house developers who continually update the product. The more than 2,000 Campus customers never have to re-implement or re-buy equipment. Campus customers merely accept the free monthly enhancements while avoiding the runaround of work-arounds.

Campus...on the Cutting Edge

According to Kelly, Mainland benefits by working with a company that is focused only on its SIS. "You can tell that with Infinite Campus the SIS is what they do; they're not interested in other things like state testing. We can sense there is a team of people always working to make the product better."

Mainland likes the company's vision and overall, how well Campus complements the school's staff. "We really like the LMS functionality with Infinite Campus; nothing like that existed with PowerSchool," said Burns. "From advanced teacher tools to kids learning at their own pace, it's all on the cutting edge. It meshes well with our administrative team in terms of pushing the envelope to do things better, faster and smarter."