Chelsea School District
Empowers Teachers, Improves Collaboration with Unified PowerSchool Experience

BULLDOGS

CHELSEA

AT A GLANCE

CHALLENGES:

- Multiple teacher tools with lack of adoption
- Poor collaboration
- Limited LMS versatility for different subjects and grade levels

DECISION:

PowerSchool Student Information System, PowerSchool Learning

RESULTS:

- Unified classroom experience with seamless integration between software solutions
- Increased staff collaboration

To maximize its usage of 1:1 devices and student learning, Chelsea School District, Michigan, needed a new learning management system (LMS) that would work with iPads and be universally adopted by teachers. The district also needed an LMS that had versatility across grade levels and subject areas, was easy for all stakeholders to learn and use, increased collaboration, and integrated with PowerSchool Student Information System (SIS).

"We had a lot of specific needs, but we had used multiple LMS's in the past and none had been effective and we didn't have buy-in from teachers," says Scott Wooster, Director of Technology, Chelsea School District. After evaluating several systems, the district partnered with PowerSchool Learning (formerly Haiku Learning). The solution integrated with PowerSchool SIS to provide one unified experience with one student database.

"PowerSchool Learning and PowerSchool SIS give us consistent data, versatility, increased opportunities for learning and development, and enhance collaboration district-wide," says Wooster. "PowerSchool's unified system is efficient, reliable, easy to maintain, and provides a fast, efficient support network."

Overview

Located just west of Ann Arbor, Michigan, Chelsea School District **serves 2,450 students and over 5,000 PowerSchool users** between staff, parents, and students.

"We were looking for something that offered a wide variety of tools for teachers," says Joe Tinsley, Technology Integration Coordinator, Chelsea School District. "Different teachers had different needs depending on topics and styles of teaching. We really wanted something that was going to be easy for teachers to get into and embrace with a quick learning curve—something that was easy to share materials, to collaborate, and from the tech side we wanted a system that was reliable so that teachers wouldn't be frustrated with downtime and other issues."

"From a technology perspective," says Wooster, "we wanted strong integration to make sure that if a

new student started and was initially enrolled in our student information system, PowerSchool, that the student would automatically be entered into the LMS so the teacher didn't have to worry about whether the student was going to get the materials they needed to get up to speed right away."

With PowerSchool SIS and PowerSchool Learning, Chelsea School District had an integrated solution that met its needs, including enhancing students' use of iPads within its 1:1 initiatives. With integrated solutions, teachers could utilize real-time insights into each student's performance, allowing them to deliver instruction tailored to the needs of each student. PowerSchool SIS and its digital gradebook provide the district with robust student data management while PowerSchool Learning lets educators spend more time teaching and less time managing assignments, tracking down homework, and grading papers. As part of the unified classroom experience, the cloud-based system empowers teachers with real-time student interaction inside and outside the classroom, bringing in more social and collaborative learning. Teachers can quickly create and deliver rich, engaging content with embedded lessons, electronically collect, annotate, and grade work, and easily collaborate and share with other educators.

Heather Conklin, Secondary Instructional Specialist, Chelsea School District, says **teacher adoption has been phenomenal, estimating 100 percent of teachers are using PowerSchool Learning to drive student growth in the classroom**.

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One Integrated System

One unified PowerSchool system with PowerSchool SIS and PowerSchool Learning helps break down product silos that exist within disparate education technology systems. Teachers, administrators, students, and parents can all attest to the frustration of learning and using multiple systems with separate log-ins.

"From a technical perspective, if we've got to maintain and manage all these different systems and make sure that they're operational and people are trained, that just creates a bigger headache too," Wooster says. "With PowerSchool, everybody is on the same system which has made it really easy for them to share information with each other and to be able to help each other out as

needed. When they're all on different systems, it doesn't work so well."

Empowered Teachers

By embracing a unified PowerSchool system, Chelsea School District is empowering teachers with the right tools to manage the entire instructional process more efficiently and revolutionize their classroom experience. Tinsley says, "A key for us with PowerSchool is the increased opportunity for learning and development. This has opened the door to 24/7 instruction and student growth. Previously, teachers depended on their own, separate websites that they had to build as learning resources and the hub for their classroom. But now, the hub has become PowerSchool."

"Before, the right tools weren't there. We could get information out but we didn't have the interactivity and workflow that we have now. We now have a system where teachers can create assignments, assessments, and then score those things easily. PowerSchool has been an easy system for teachers to use," Tinsley says.

Conklin adds, "It's easy for teachers of all different comfort levels with technology. At the most basic level, we have teachers who are improving the workflow by adding digital content instead of using printouts and paper copies. Other users who are much more comfortable with technology are using more advanced features that PowerSchool Learning offers. They have kids creating Wikis, they have online discussions, they're giving online assessments, they have discussions going on in and outside of school, and they're running self-paced blended learning for their students."

Improved Efficiency

With PowerSchool Learning, Chelsea School District is saving time and money through improved efficiencies to spend more time teaching and less time managing the

the classroom. Teachers can create embedded, multimedia-rich lessons with a few simple clicks, and gauge student learning using a variety of formative, summative, and authentic assessments.

"A teacher's smallest resource is time," says Wooster. "If you can make their job easier with more efficient tools with less clicks to get things done, it will save them valuable time. We had access to another LMS for years but teachers weren't using it because it was too complicated. PowerSchool Learning is totally different. Teachers can see that it's actually saving them time and making the job easier."

Once teachers have built out a class course, all of the time and effort that go into preparing materials can be leveraged by other teachers who can re-use the course content—either during that same term, or in subsequent terms or years. Teachers control course publishing and can make adjustments each term or year as needed and share each unit as it's appropriate for the timing of the class.

"Each year, teachers are adding more and more resources to course content. They can go back in and say, 'Okay, here's my classroom last year. I can just pull out everything I created last year,'" Conklin says.

"When the materials are already created, it makes it much easier to share it out with other teachers, especially new teachers who have just started teaching a course that was previously taught. The teachers already there can share this information out and now they're starting with a really good base so they can be consistent from classroom to classroom," says Wooster.

Customizations to Extend Capabilities

Unlike many student information systems, PowerSchool isn't limited to pre-loaded functionality, but instead, features an open architecture design that can be easily tailored to the Chelsea School District's needs with customized configurations to extend SIS capabilities.

"Early on we were able to create custom forms and reports that we needed, and now much of that is included with PowerSchool. We have created all of our K-5 report cards in custom reports and continue to tweak those from year to year," says Tinsley.

"One of PowerSchool SIS's greatest features has been the ability to make customizations to meet our needs. In addition to customized report cards, we also customized transcripts, added seating charts, and even created specialized alerts to meet the needs of students in each of our buildings. Overall, PowerSchool has been a SIS that meets our needs with its flexibility," Wooster says.

Enhanced Teacher Collaboration to Improve the Education Experience

Chelsea School District is using the PowerSchool Learning system as its own district intranet with teachers and administrative staff as users. The collaborative site is used for everything from staff professional development and learning resources to a shared calendar, district announcements, initiatives, and more. The high school principal has a PowerSchool Learning site to model for his staff using the system. He puts all his staff meeting information and a "Bulldog Update," which he previously had to physically print, copy, and hand out.

Conclusion

With PowerSchool Learning and PowerSchool SIS, Chelsea School District is empowering teachers and driving student growth with an integrated, unified system. Teachers are embracing the solutions and collaborating more to enhance the educational experience even more.

"From my standpoint, PowerSchool just gets better every year," Tinsley says.

"PowerSchool is meeting the needs of our students, teachers, and administrative staff," adds Wooster. "We are enjoying enhanced collaboration that is translating directly to improved opportunities in the classroom."

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