

AnalyticVue Enhances Learning and Teaching at Meridian Community Unit School District 223



Meridian Community Unit School District 223 serves three towns: Stillman Valley, Davis Junction, and Monroe Center. This School District in Northern Illinois serves students

from Pre-K all the way to 12th grade. For the School District, the stakes couldn't be higher. The livelihoods of roughly 1600 students are placed in their hands. They are essentially prepping every student that goes through their system for life.

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Joe Mullikin

Head of Data Analytics and Principal of the Meridian School District

The Challenge

Joe Mullikin, Head of Data Analytics and Principal of the Meridian School District, is well aware of the complexity of the task. Disruptions caused by COVID, constantly shifting goalposts when it comes to education policy, and a myriad of other complications have not made their job any easier. However, even in that climate, Mullikin named disparate data as having been their biggest challenge. A demonstration, one might say, of the steely, single-minded resolve that is universally characteristic of dedicated educators.

“For us, the biggest issue was that there was data everywhere,” he explained. “We’ve got local assessments that we’re taking, state assessments, nationally normed assessments, different programs that we’re working, and all of that data is in different places.”

Getting teachers to be able to see all of this fragmented information was, at best, going to be a hard task. And even then, would come

at the cost of having the time to action-plan. They had to choose what to focus their time and cognitive resources on. That meant that they couldn’t see the full picture of data and learning for individual students, groups, and classes as a whole, and see how things were correlated.

“Kids aren’t just test scores – they aren’t just represented by an academic score,” Mullikin said. “We needed to be able to look at a kid and see other socio-emotional data in relation to that academic information.”

Data disaggregation would also be important. They needed to be able to separate the data points that represented risk factors for academic achievement. Or to be able to look at sub-groups – like those for whom English is not a first language – to ensure they weren’t underserved. For teachers to be able to help students, they would need to be able to easily see all this data, identify correlations, and take the necessary course of action

The Solution

At the time Joe Mullikin encountered AnalyticVue, he was already working to try and find a solution to the challenges the Meridian Community Unit School District was facing. Balancing the challenges of his day-to-day responsibilities and the enormity of the task at hand was proving to be more than a handful. They needed to be able to partner with a team that would help build their solutions, develop the necessary algorithms, and the tools for the visualization of the data. AnalyticVue turned out to be that partner and they have not looked back since.

“It’s been a really great relationship,” Mullikin said. Asked what pleased him most about the cooperation, his response was: “They’ve been incredibly responsive to requests and the feedback that we’ve had. Their willingness to help us build something that really does allow us to best support teachers and administrators – at the end of the day, that is the goal of this.”

The Results

Secure data integration

AnalyticVue has enabled the Meridian District to reduce the time it takes to bring all of their student data into one location, but also to do this in a secure way. The importance of security when it comes to student data, or any personal data, is a matter that carries legal and compliance ramifications. Working with AnalyticVue, the Meridian Community Unit School District was able to ensure that throughout the process, the data their system was pulling from different platforms was being handled by a secure loader, was going through secure links, going through the School District’s Student Information System, and that the infrastructure as a whole was compliant with regulations.

Improved visibility into students’ performance

The new system has improved data disaggregation, giving the schools and district greater insight into students’ performance.

Beyond simple assessment scores, they now have the ability to drill down to specific standards. Information about what specific areas students are struggling with can be identified. This enables Meridian District to set goals and action plans to help catch students up.

There is also a standards mastery framework that enables them to look at individual standards and see how their mastery is connected to that of previous standards. This is vital when diagnosing problems when students have difficulty – to treat the disease and not the symptoms, as it were.

Unified K12 data infrastructure

By unifying all the data from different systems, there is a more holistic picture of every individual student, including things like SEL factors. This unification is not just a lateral one – joining data from systems that run parallel to each other.

It also goes forwards in time, creating a useful history of information that teachers can add notes and information to. This travels with the student as they progress through the system.

Ongoing support

Even with all the progress that has been made, the system is still being improved. There are tweaks and enhancements constantly being made. AnalyticVue's ongoing support is important to help ensure that the system continues to work as intended, continues to evolve and get better, and responds to new policies or any external changes that affect the current set up

Increases in teacher efficacy

The improved data visibility helps teachers to accurately identify issues and address them. This ability to see the results of their efforts brings about a sense of self-efficacy, improves motivation, and the belief that they can truly help the students. This show of faith in turn helps students believe in themselves and their ability to improve.

Increased data literacy

Teachers have a greater ability to look at the data available to them, understand it, and analyze it. If a particular assessment question has tripped up most students, for example, teachers are better positioned, because of increased data literacy, to correctly determine why. Teachers are equipped with the relevant insights from data without having to perform advanced statistical analyses. This enables them to set priorities and chart their plans of action, and perhaps most importantly, ask the right questions to help work out why things are the way they are.

Conclusion

For Meridian Community Unit School District 223, there have been quantifiable benefits to implementing the AnalyticVue solution, from data integration all the way to teacher efficacy.

The possibilities don't end there, however. There are plans to bring this data visibility to the organizational level and give the public the ability to see, on an overarching scale, dashboards with this information. Joe Mullikin understands the importance of transparency, especially for public schools. For the general public to be able to see the challenges within the education system, and have the data clearly spell out what the problem areas are, can only help to spur developmental change.