

Switzerland

PowerSchool Closes the Gap Between Students and Parents at Leysin American School

Challenge

The Leysin American School, founded in 1960, has 380 students from more than 55 countries. The boarding school for grades 8–12 offers International Baccalaureate, United States High School Diploma, and English as a Second Language (ESL) programs. Located in an Alpine resort village in French Switzerland, the prestigious Leysin American School celebrates its 50th anniversary this year. The Leysin American School has used Pearson's PowerSchool® for more than 10 years.

Parents who send their children to the Leysin American School in Switzerland live and work around the world, sometimes in remote locations. This was a major challenge for Leysin American School administrators, who formerly mailed student progress reports eight times a year.



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Prior to using PowerSchool, Squier, who was then Academic Dean, constantly encouraged teachers to finish grading and get results back to students. Parent/teacher conferences were less productive because faculty spent a great deal of time informing parents about their students' past performance before starting a dialogue about how to help the students move forward.

Solution

In 1999, the Leysin American School decided to purchase PowerSchool, a web-based application that gives teachers, administrators, students, and parents access to the most current student information via the Internet. School leaders considered other systems but liked the way PowerSchool could be used on PC or Macintosh platforms and had functions to handle every aspect of school life. PowerSchool, the leading and fastest-growing student information system (SIS) today, provides real benefits for teachers and administrators. Teachers can easily input information and print out personalized reports for students and parents. Guidance counselors can track behavior and administrators can access up-to-date reports at a moment's notice.

PowerSchool ended the Leysin American School's regular struggle to mail student progress reports to parents around the world.

“Currently, we send out no academic records and expect the parents to track the progress of their kids online,” Squier said. “We now only send out final transcripts when the kids graduate or leave the school, and this cost savings enabled us to pay for the whole PowerSchool deployment within two years.”

Benefits

PowerSchool has helped close the distance between Leysin American School students and their parents—a particularly important feat for a boarding school.

“Parents in really remote areas have found PowerSchool to be a huge boon,” Squier said. “Some of them have said they feel closer to their student now, while they are 5,000 miles away, than they did when their child went to school down the street.”

Students are more aware of their academic progress because of the real-time data available through PowerSchool. Squier no longer has to remind teachers to quickly enter student grades—students have taken over that job. Parent/teacher conferences have become more constructive as parents already know how their child is doing in school and are ready to discuss remediation, if necessary. Measuring standards in the Leysin American School’s three different programs—U.S. Diploma, International Baccalaureate, and ESL—is no problem with multiple tracking overlays available in PowerSchool.

Leysin American School faculty can also use PowerSchool outside the classroom. Faculty who live among the students as dormitory parents award weekly privileges, such as movie passes or an extra hour before check-in, based on real-time GPAs provided through PowerSchool. Study hall proctors encourage students to work on specific assignments or study for tests that have been pre-scheduled through PowerSchool.

Squier summed up the Leysin American School’s decade with PowerSchool this way: “The fact that everyone is on the same page with respect to how the students are doing is wonderful.”

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