

## Mead School District

### Challenge

Administrators and teachers in the Mead School District (Mead) in Mead, WA, knew they could use their students' educational data to strengthen their curriculum and teaching strategies. With more than 9,000 students and 14 schools, Mead wanted easy access to their students' testing and demographic data. They wanted to be able to group that data to show student performance and seamlessly share information across schools and classrooms, and with parents. And they wanted all of this in a system that was user-friendly and customizable.

Mead's current student information system (SIS) did not allow them to access enough timely data for meaningful analysis or let them move the data to other systems to see trends in their students' performance. In some cases they would input data into the system that they weren't able to view again.

Mead leaders decided to look for a new SIS that could help them increase efficiencies and pursue curriculum and instructional goals.



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- Laura Cowert, Mead data manager

### Solution

Mead began the search by asking 12 companies for information on their SISs. They narrowed the options and pulled together 30 administrators, teachers, technology directors, and administrative staff throughout the district to rate them. The unanimous choice was PowerSchool® Premier.

Mead started using PowerSchool in the 2007–08 school year, starting with full implementation at the secondary school level. The transition to the PowerSchool database was “seamless,” said Dave Willyard, network assistant in Mead’s Technology Services. PowerSchool includes an embedded Oracle database that does not require a database administrator or certification to run. During PowerSchool training, teachers caught on quickly because of the system’s user-friendly design and intuitive features.

“You could not have asked for a better transition,” said Dan Butler, assistant superintendent and executive director of technology.

The barriers they faced in accessing data were no longer present. If the data was stored in PowerSchool, Mead could directly access it. Administrators and educators could easily search, input, and export student educational data, such as test scores or attendance, in real-time instead of trying to piece together separate spreadsheets or submit requests for information through their former SIS.

Mead also found they could customize PowerSchool to their needs and preferences—whenever they needed to make a change—such as adding network usernames and passwords. They modified school registration screens to make the process more streamlined and accurate and created their own immunization and special education screens to meet precise district staff needs.

“The benefits of being able to do our own customizations are numerous. First, we are truly managing our own success,” said Matt Miller, Mead assistant director of technology. “We are responsive to our users’ needs, making specific information available to certain user groups by virtue of how we design our pages. In the instance of our customized registration pages, we streamlined the process of registering a student, increasing accuracy and speed.”

As part of its PowerSchool implementation, Mead began using PowerTeacher™ and the parent portal to ease teachers' administrative tasks and more efficiently communicate with parents. By saving time on manual tasks like attendance and entering grades, Mead teachers can dedicate more classroom time to instruction.

Through the parent portal, Mead parents and students can use the Internet to access real-time data about student performance, such as grades, attendance, teacher comments, and registration information. This allows parents to be involved in their child's education, and empowers students to take ownership of their educational experience.

Mead decided to enhance their data analysis capabilities by purchasing Pearson Inform™, which interoperates with PowerSchool and provides comparison and analysis of multiple assessments, No Child Left Behind reporting, and reports at student, class, school, and district levels.

## Benefits

Mead has found that PowerSchool allows teachers, administrators, and support staff to accomplish more in less time—giving them more time for student instruction, data analysis, and intervention.

"Every single employee in education is being asked to do more with less," said Laura Cowert, Mead data manager. "PowerSchool is a way to do that extra work we've all been asked to do with less time and less money to do it. You couldn't give them a better tool."

The tools within PowerTeacher have streamlined record keeping as well as guided teachers in developing their curriculum. A feature within PowerTeacher that links test scores with standards helps teachers focus their daily classroom instruction. Mead teachers say that mapping assessments to specific standards has made them more aware of how each lesson ties back into the standards.

Mead parents now have more access to their students' progress than ever before. With PowerSchool, Mead now has a parent portal that includes email notifications and a way for parents to update demographic information. It also contains an Announcements feature that Mead uses

to publish a parent directory that's internal to each school instead of public to the entire district. Use of the parent portal has increased with PowerSchool.

"Our parents use PowerSchool's parent portal at a much higher level," Miller said. "The interface, we have been told, is significantly more friendly and usable to parents—and easier on their eyes. They love the design of PowerSchool."

In addition, Mead has realized a 50 percent cost savings by switching to PowerSchool. "It's a superior product at a price point that's really, really attractive," Butler said.

PowerSchool along with the data analysis capabilities of Pearson Inform has given Mead the power to collect and use their data to meet their needs and goals.

"What it does is it increases the capacity of everyone at every level to do their work better, and that increases the capacity to be responsive," Miller said. "It allows for that innovation. If we can envision a solution, we can build it (with PowerSchool)."

## About Pearson

Pearson, the global leader in education and education technology, reaches and engages today's digital natives with effective and personalized learning, as well as dedicated professional development for their teachers. This commitment is demonstrated in the company's investment in innovative print and digital education materials for pre-K through college, student information systems and learning management systems, teacher professional development, career certification programs, and testing and assessment products that set the standard for the industry. The company's respected brands include Scott Foresman, Prentice Hall, Addison Wesley, Benjamin Cummings, PEMSolutions, Stanford 10, SuccessNet, MyLabs, PowerSchool, SuccessMaker, and many others. Pearson's comprehensive offerings help inform targeted instruction and intervention so that success is within reach of every student at every level of education. Pearson's commitment to education for all is supported by the global philanthropic initiatives of the Pearson Foundation. Pearson's other primary businesses include the Financial Times Group and the Penguin Group.