

Spotlight

Case Study: Brockton Public Schools

Brockton Public Schools Increases Efficiency and Drives Student Outcomes with the eScholar Complete Data Warehouse® Solution

The Challenge

Brockton Public Schools (BPS) is a public school system serving over 15,000 students in 24 schools in the city of Brockton, MA. The district uses seven primary systems to maintain district data: students, health information, special education, transportation, assessment, bilingual data and HR/Payroll. BPS also has four secondary data systems: student library access/computer security, community schools-program information.

Like its counterparts across the country, BPS has seen in recent years an ever-growing increase in reporting requirements, accountability measures, and requests for information. More and more, these requests require the full context of data in order to be actionable.

The Solution

To address the increasing need for easily accessible, user-friendly data, BPS purchased the eScholar Complete Data Warehouse® solution in September 2005. The goal was to transform how administrators, staff, curriculum leaders and other stakeholders access and analyze student and school information. The eScholar Complete Data Warehouse® solution incorporates all of the district's data into one system so that reports, charts and information can be generated on just about any topic or parameter. Access is browser-based so staff can view the reports anywhere they have Internet access. Output is user-friendly and generated within seconds.

Secrets to Success

For a number of reasons, many technology projects in education fail to take root. Sometimes it is because the stakeholders are not involved, at other times adequate resources are not allocated. BPS focused on providing a strong foundation for the eScholar Complete Data Warehouse® solution to ensure that it not only got off to

a good start, but actually thrived, while having a positive impact on district policy, classroom practice and student outcomes. Toward this end:

- BPS created staff positions dedicated to the data warehouse implementation.
- Project staff work closely with the district and school staff – the actual users – to prioritize data sets for loading, develop relevant data reports, and build a culture of data quality within the district.
- Careful attention was paid to documentation so that the project did not become dependent on particular individuals.

A data warehouse project is only successful if the users actually use the system. BPS focused on developing reports that are useful, relevant and easily accessible to users with varying technical skills. A website is being developed that will provide all the necessary supporting materials such as a quick-reference guide, a more extensive user-guide, a data dictionary, and other materials that will help district staff utilize the warehouse to its maximum potential. The eScholar Complete Data Warehouse® solution serves as a standard source for key performance indicators to monitor district, school, and grade level progress on dashboards made available to all users.

The Impact

Although implementation is continually evolving and improving, BPS has already realized a positive impact on services for students. For example, district staff have utilized reports from the warehouse to better target resources for students who are likely to drop out of high school. Research has indicated that 8th grade students

with low attendance and low course grades are at significant risk for dropping out when they get to high school. BPS has a number of programs such as evening education, after school programs and alternative settings that were designed to assist students. In the past, guidance counselors and program coordinators would look through lists of hundreds of 8th grade students and try to determine the best program for identified students. The process was labor intensive and prone to error. Through the eScholar Complete Data Warehouse® solution, staff are provided a report that shows which students met the identified criteria and prioritize those students most at-risk. In addition, the progress of at-risk students can continue to be monitored and the most successful interventions identified.

As another example of increased efficiency in critical administrative tasks, BPS is using the eScholar Complete Data Warehouse® solution to identify those students who require an appeal to the Massachusetts Board of Education to allow them to graduate from high school. The appeals process requires detailed assessment data, course grades, and attendance data for not only the student of interest but also a cohort of peers. This data may span over three years. It is estimated that the process took 50 hours three times per year. With the warehouse, the high school principal can generate the appeals reports in just 4 minutes, for a savings of 150 hours per year.

Finally, BPS has also utilized the eScholar Complete Data Warehouse® solution to explore trends in student performance that would have been too time consuming and labor intensive to conduct without it. For example, staff and researchers often wonder whether a student's attendance has an effect on standardized assessment performance. Without the warehouse, staff would need to obtain the student's attendance from one database, the assessment score from another database, and merge on a spreadsheet. The eScholar Complete Data Warehouse® solution makes these data available for any user in minutes allowing them to be manipulated by grade level, by school, by student subgroup (e.g. race/ethnicity), etc.

It is clear that the eScholar Complete Data Warehouse® solution is having a strong positive impact on district practice and student outcomes in Brockton Public Schools.

Highlights:

- eScholar transforms how administrators, staff, curriculum leaders and other stakeholders access and analyze student and school information.
- Using an eScholar Complete Data Warehouse® solution enables school districts to quickly adapt to ever-growing reporting requirements, accountability measures, and requests for information.
- The eScholar Complete Data Warehouse® solution integrates all of the district's data into one location so that reports, charts and information can be generated on just about any topic or parameter.
- Using eScholar Complete Data Warehouse® solution saves districts valuable time by giving administrators the ability to generate reports in minutes rather than hours.

About eScholar

eScholar is the nation's leading educational data system company. eScholar clients have achieved phenomenal success using our data management and analysis solutions to track and improve pre-K through postsecondary student achievement. Relied on by over 3,400 school districts across the country, eScholar transforms the way educators use and understand the data collected through a myriad of sources. For more information about eScholar, visit www.escholar.com.



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