

How Unifying Data Unlocks Students' Potential



WHAT EDUCATORS NEED MOST

By definition, education is “the process of providing systemic instruction in a body of knowledge.” But dictionary definitions can be cold and clinical. Ask a teacher what education means, and you will learn about its heart: the excitement of seeing the gift of enlightenment in a young reader’s eyes, or the joy of knowing a student has the chance to grasp newfound – and perhaps previously unimagined – potential.

It was precisely that potential that set our company, Project Education, on a quest to create innovations to help teachers and students by removing barriers and illuminating paths to action. For years, we posed a question to hundreds of teachers and administrators: What’s holding you back?

Three specific issues came back time and again:

- 1 Lack of Time Leads to Blind Spots** – Teachers and administrators need relevant information to make better instructional and program decisions but digging through disconnected data can take too long.
- 2 Lagging Technology** – When platforms that fail to evolve with the needs, purposes and opportunities of teachers and students, systems become obsolete but difficult to replace.
- 3 Unwieldy Access** – Barriers to extracting data can come in the form of cryptic interfaces or convoluted systems, inhibiting real-time information when teachers need it most

Our course was clear: Schools and districts were already collecting vast amounts of data. If we could craft a system that would unlock the opportunities within that data, that would transform databases into unified, evolving, ever-improving assets – and make the system easy for educators to use – we could make a lasting difference in the lives of countless teachers and students.



“After almost 30 years of working with teachers and schools, the response to what can help them do a better job always comes down to ‘more time’. Project Education helps get more out of those 24 hours we get by making the connections we need, when we need them.”

-Marcy Canady, Retired Principal, Director, Assistant Superintendent

CRAFTING A UNIFIED DATA SOLUTION

Educators everywhere are asked to be saviors in overcoming serious student achievement challenges while woefully under-resourced. It's a task akin to long-distance conversations using two tin cans and a roll of twine: The information is just not getting through.

The miracle is that each year, educators do indeed improve outcomes for many of their students. But imagine what could be – the real jumps in student performance – if these gifted educators were given tools that truly performed as needed.



Project Education has created a database management and access solution with web-based software that allows teachers and administrators instant access to information in a variety of ways – for decision making, to be alerted of specific student needs to advance, and even to tackle tough behavioral challenges or disadvantages. Its tools also allow teachers to share information with administrators, other teachers, students and parents, including translations for the parents' home languages. Goodbye, tin cans.

The Project Education system began with a module to help English-Language Learners – Project ELL – but soon blossomed into an ever-growing array of solutions to address the everyday needs that all districts face:

Project Education Customizable Platform – General Data Access			
Project ELL English Language Learners	Project RTI Response to Intervention	Project Truancy Attendance Issues	Project 504 Learning Differences
Project Behavior Behavior Incidents	Project Title I Title I Accommodations	Project CTE Continuing Education	Project SPED Special Education
Project GT Gifted & Talented	Project Grad Graduation Track	Data Anywhere/Data Everywhere Interfaces for existing data systems	

At Bastrop ISD, administrators can quickly report that their 14 campuses have 3,057 students receiving tiered interventions and that 12,243 RTI conversations have occurred about those students. And that's just the beginning. Project Education can also disaggregate the data down to the individual and monitor progress. In short, it helps Bastrop students achieve more.

The system's breakthrough is its capacity to unify and refine student data from multiple sources to help improve outcomes. It shines in its support for specific student populations such as GT, SPED, ELL and others by providing direct paths to school and district compliance, and through helping teachers create more informed, effective learning plans.

The platform is positioned on a layer (within a school district's architecture) where it can readily access previously siloed student databases like assessments, daily performance, and demographics. The successful "knitting" of all this siloed information helps Project Education programs deliver a remarkable degree of actionable, in-depth insights and easy-to-interpret reports – with no waiting or digging, just instant, effective access.

Since no two districts are alike, customization is an imperative. Each module can be adjusted to a district's specific parameters for compliance, procedures, action items and goals – and the everyday realities of its student populations.

Because we could customize the data we need to access in Project GT, our team was able to review and process over 2,000 referrals from 25 campuses in one day. This system allows us to efficiently consider data to make decisions about services needed for students in our district."

- Kristin Graham, Gifted/Talented Facilitator, Advanced Academic Studies, Spring Branch ISD

PRESSURE-TESTING IN A PANDEMIC

The once-in-a-century pandemic that is COVID-19 has flipped all conventions for districts, teachers, students and parents. With only almost no warning, all had to become masters of dealing with distance learning if they were to thrive. It has also put the Project Education system through a rigorous, real-world test.

The good news: The tools that make Project Education an easy, efficient and productive solution also equip educators with the tools to function with seamless remote access, making working from home more viable for teachers and administrators.



Out of the 1,400 English Learners in Lubbock ISD, approximately 600-800 students had one or more failing grades in a reporting period. After implementing our process that included the Students at Risk due to Grades report, failing grades reduced to 200 students per grading period in a single year.

Our working world has changed. Many industry sectors have realized that a hybrid blend of Work From Office/Work From Home is likely to continue even after the pandemic has passed. That forecast holds true for education, too: New structures of combined in-person/remote experiences answer practical realities and provide benefits that cannot be ignored. Districts must make a data/technology infrastructure that delivers consistent access and intuitive design a budget priority.

THE TRUTH ABOUT TRAINING

No technology solution can succeed without the support of a training program almost as robust as the solution itself. The Project Education team realized that it was designing products for experts in teaching – not experts in software. To help ensure districts' success, Project Education offers extensive training and ongoing consulting to achieve a Total Solution approach. The end result: even more positive outcomes across the board because teacher and student populations are better supported.

“The CEO and CAO as well as their staff have been available to do onsite, face-to-face training with our district staff.”

-Dr. Sheila Guzman, Elgin ISD



EDUCATION, UNLEASHED

The real benefit of Project Education's unified data approach is its time-savings. Most teachers and administrators are already equipped to make smart choices for their students. What they may not have is the simple time to retrieve the facts that allow for truly informed decisions.

“Project RTI has made goal-setting and progress monitoring for students simple and effective. The ability to customize communication with parents has really helped families understand how our interventions support individual student needs.”

-Jennifer Greene Gast, Academic RTI Coordinator, Bastrop ISD

Making informed decisions possible is the heart of Project Education's technology. It overcomes the challenges that those hundreds of teachers told us about – the blind spots, the lagging technology, and the unwieldy data access – to help achieve significant jumps in student performance in areas like attendance, grades, and graduation rates. What's just as real, but harder to measure, are the benefits of higher self-esteem and well-earned confidence for these young learners, essential factors for happiness and productivity.



Is your school district's data delivering its true potential?

Visit ProjectEducation.net to learn more about our products and services, or contact us at 972-424-6298 or info@projecteducation.net, and let's start a conversation.



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