

# CUSTOMER CONNECTIONS



## SCHOOL DISTRICTS PROFILE

- » Boyertown, Oley Valley, Wyomissing, Reading, and Muhlenberg school districts
- » Student populations ranging in size from approximately 1,960 students in Wyomissing School District to nearly 18,000 in Reading School District

### CHALLENGES

- Improve student achievement by developing a strategy to help educators make data-informed instructional decisions
- Finding time and training to develop administrators and teachers to best utilize the tools

### OBJECTIVES

- Make the data easier to access
- Create common assessments
- Create assessments targeting academic standards

### SOLUTION

- Leverage the strengths of IU member schools, local business, and **PerformancePLUS** to create, implement, and sustain a process for using data to improve student achievement

### PERFORMANCEPLUS APPLICATIONS

- PerformanceTRACKER
- AssessmentBUILDER

### BENEFITS

- Data is easier to access, making it easier to assess classroom and curriculum performance
- Instructional revision is being made based on real data, not anecdotal evidence
- Increased collaboration among the participating districts provides a rich opportunity to learn and exchange practices

## Berks County Intermediate Unit, Berks Business Education Coalition and SunGard—Creating A Visionary Partnership for Improving Student Learning

In 2008, the Berks County Intermediate Unit, local businesses in the Berks Business Education Coalition (BBEC) and SunGard K-12 Education collaborated to initiate a process that effectively uses data to improve student achievement for local K-12 students. The initiative represents an innovative, cooperative strategy involving not just educational but also area business involvement.

Berks County IU (Including member school districts Boyertown Area, Oley Valley, Wyomissing Area and Reading), the BBEC and SunGard K-12 Education recently put this innovative partnership to work, by asking teachers to attend a meeting to analyze student data from the previous school year and set goals based on that data to improve student performance across every school district involved.

One of the goals of the initiative was to leverage the community support for schools in the Berks County IU and give local businesses the opportunity to contribute to the educational success of the students in their community. "This project began with the idea of a countywide purchase of SunGard K-12 Education's **PerformancePLUS** tools. The IU's work with the Berks Business Education Coalition (BBEC) opened the door for the conversation on how to support the schools in the challenging work of finding time and training to develop administrators and teachers to best utilize the tools," said Dr. Bonnie Troxell, Division Administrator for Curriculum, Staff Development and Related Services at the Berks County Intermediate Unit.

By involving local businesses administrators in the initiative, Berks County IU administrators hope to give them a clear picture of what schools are doing every day to improve student learning and in the process, student achievement. "What we have seen in the schools we are working in, is an increased understanding of how professional learning communities can look at well organized data in order to better assess what is happening in the classroom," said Troxell.

"SunGard has provided an excellent strategy to provide educators with the tools and expertise to make informed decisions about instructional modifications that are necessary to continuously improve student achievement."

ROBERT RUNKLE  
BBEC Executive Director

These new skills are having an effect on professional discussion and instruction. "The conversations are richer and more meaningful than past conversations. Better instructional decisions are being made," continued Troxell said.

Through the partnership, SunGard K-12 Education is providing professional development services showcasing the best practices for using curriculum and assessment data to improve student learning.

"SunGard has provided an excellent strategy to provide educators with the tools and expertise to make informed decisions about instructional modifications that are necessary to continuously improve student achievement," said BBEC Executive Director Robert Runkle.

Teachers from Boyertown Area, Oley Valley, Wyomissing Area and Reading, as well as teachers from other member districts in the Berks IU, have used AssessmentBUILDER to create common assessments in mathematics and science. These assessments targeted the academic standards for the state of Pennsylvania and the vocational needs that were identified from workplaces. The assessments will help teachers monitor progress toward a high level of performance on the state tests.

### WHAT OUR CUSTOMERS ARE SAYING

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Participating districts have also gathered at the Berks IU where Educational Consultant, Marty Horner and Strategic Consultant, Bena Kallick from SunGard K-12 Education facilitated a data retreat. During the retreat, attendees analyzed the data on student performance from the previous year, set specific and measurable goals to improve student performance for the upcoming school year, and revised their curriculum to support student learning in the classroom.

"The collaboration among districts provided a rich opportunity to learn from one another as teachers exchanged practices. Many people left the experience saying that they learned more in the two days than they had over the past year," Kallick said.

Using data to monitor progress and adjust for success, the team developed a self-assessment instrument for each district to administer. The instrument provides a continuum of stages from exploration to implementation to sustainability across critical factors for success: leadership, curriculum, assessment, use of data, and technology.

For Troxell, partnering with SunGard K-12 Education and the BBEC brings together key educational components for improving student learning. "The business partnership's financial support along with the expertise of Bena Kallick and SunGard K-12 Education's **PerformancePLUS** training team has opened doors for the school districts of Berks County to develop data informed cultures in their schools in a timely and personalized manner," she said.

## About Us

SunGard K-12 Education is a leader in the K-12 Education Industry, providing secure, web-based, and reliable software solutions for student management, financial and human resources, learning management, and special education in K-12 schools. SunGard K-12 Education currently works with over 1,500 school districts around the country to deliver K-12 software solutions, designed specifically to support student achievement.

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