



THE NETTER

The Schoolnet newsletter for data-driven decision making

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Northside Independent School District speaks to *The Netter* about their Curriculum Management System and what it has meant for the district.

Welcome

Welcome to the fifth issue of *The Netter*, the Schoolnet newsletter for data-driven decision making and student achievement. *The Netter* is written for educators who regard technology as an important component in the success of our districts, schools, teachers, and students.

In this issue, Schoolnet shares an interview with Northside Independent School District, a look at what's brewing in our "Schoolnet Lab," and of course, some useful tips and tricks, and much more. As always, we want to hear from you! Send us your [feedback!](#)

Client Spotlight

The Netter talks to Northside ISD's Roberto Flores, Curriculum Management System Coordinator



Northside has been a customer of Schoolnet for about six years. In that time, the district has come to rely on reports from Schoolnet's Account,

the curriculum management tool called Align, Schoolnet's teacher portal tool called Outreach, the GradeSpeed Gradebook, as well as Parent Connection.

What would you say is most used by teachers at Northside of the Schoolnet solution?

We use Outreach extensively here at the district. It's a very easy tool for teachers to upload their newsletters, assignments, homework, etc. With Outreach teachers manage their own webpage and they can then easily communicate with parents and students with regards to what's happening in the classrooms. Just about every teacher at Northside has an Outreach page. Our teachers love it. In fact, every person holding a professional teaching certificate has one.

What about your experience with Schoolnet?

I use Schoolnet quite a bit, and for me, I really like the MySchoolnet tab because I

can get to anywhere I need to from there – it's the Schoolnet dashboard that I really enjoy.

Are your administrators and Superintendent logging into Schoolnet?

We have a very high percentage of usage from all staff in the district. Teachers and staff are averaging about 80%.

Sounds pretty high!

Yes – in fact I hear things like "I can't live without it!" I hear comments like that all the time. It has become a part of our culture, a way of life. If we took it away there would be more screams about taking it away than the complaints that we get, and the complaints are far and few between.

So how has Northside adopted Schoolnet? What are some effects Schoolnet had on your district?

If we look back at where we started, our schools and teachers were in silos. If teachers wanted current or historical information on a student, they had to go to a file room, find the file, and review the information in that room – they could not remove the file. If the child had transferred to the school from within the district, the file had to be physically sent to the new campus before a teacher could find anything out about that student. One simple difference is that now, when a child



Client Spotlight, continued

Schoolnet talks with Northside Independent School District

enrolls into a new school, that child's information is accessible to the new school within 24 hours. That kind of sharing within the district has been dramatically improved.

When teachers meet now, how are those meetings different from before?

The difference now is also in where they are meeting. Their meetings are happening in computer labs with the data in front of them. And now that they have immediate data and results, their conversations have changed as well. Moreover, they can now see how they are performing next to other teachers in the school and the district, and can participate in professional learning communities to share best practices. Through this collaborative environment they can pinpoint things that they can change in their instruction. Cooperation and information sharing has leveled across all members of our district. The environment in which we operate has changed too, as data is much more accessible and is in real-time. The ultimate result is improvement in student performance at the school, on benchmarks and standardized test scores.

How else is Northside utilizing Schoolnet?

Our bread and butter is our reporting analysis tools and benchmarking for state standardized testing. We have streamlined accessibility to reporting analysis tools, benchmarking tools and eased the administration of standardized tests. In fact, we have revolutionized our benchmarking system. Before Schoolnet, our system was in a silo. It consisted of PDF files and that's it! It took about 30 days for the results to be handed back to principals and teachers, by that point they had moved on to different lessons. Now, our teachers can address problems right away – and the instruction is much more effective.

The data in Schoolnet appeals to the visual person, it's very easy to understand and navigate. There is now a lot more information readily available, and everything is at your fingertips.

Furthermore, we have done a lot of work to make sure teachers receive the training they need on Schoolnet. Teachers can select what they want to be trained on and use materials, guided online tours, and workshops that we have put together. We also have training for administrators to help them learn how to aggregate or disaggregate information for their campuses and the district.

How is the district using Schoolnet to manage and access the curriculum?

Before Schoolnet, the curriculum was in multiple formats such as Excel, MS Word, PDFs, and it was stored in multiple locations such as in emails, on disks, in shared drives, printed, and on Intranet sites!

Nothing was streamlined.

When we brought on Schoolnet, it forced us to put our curriculum in one "container." This is when we standardized our curriculum, so now our curriculum looks exactly the same across the district. For example, the "know-understand-do" model is the same for all our teachers – with the same essential questions for each section.

What is some feedback from teachers on Schoolnet?

Our teachers really rely on the benchmark and item analysis reports within Schoolnet. They also truly rely on Outreach – especially because they don't have to be a webmaster to use it. Now that they are used to the system, they are asking for comparison reports to see how their kids performed on the state tests compared to the benchmark tests, etc. This is a report that I, with Schoolnet, am working on creating for them.

What about your administrative team, how does the district, as a whole utilize Schoolnet?

As a district, we keep a close eye on our subpopulations. These are our at-risk students that are either in special ed, need a personal graduation plan, have failed a state test, have been held back, are economically disadvantaged, or are part of an ethnic minority group. We tag these students in our Student Information System and subsequently pull this data into the Curriculum Management System (CMS), which is what we call the Schoolnet system here at Northside. The CMS enables us to generate "sub-pop" reports so we are very much aware of the students that fall within these groups as well as the steps we need to take to remedy any short falls. These reports are very important to our Superintendent because it could be one or two kids that make the difference whether we are recognized as acceptable or exemplary and how much funding the district receives each year.





Client Spotlight, continued

Schoolnet speaks with Northside Independent School District

In addition, the benchmark reports by score groups are also a very important to our administrators so that they know how they are performing in comparison to similar campuses. They also rely on the analysis spreadsheets for the at-risk populations and how they performed on previous year's state tests by objective. Soon they will also be able to see the current grades for a six-week cycle, benchmark grades, and last year's TAKS score – to see how they correlate.

What is the parental involvement with the district?

We employ the ParentConnection from the GradeSpeed Gradebook – we actually have about 60,000 accounts in our parent connection – and parents really love it – they can set up notices if their child's grade goes below a certain number, or if their child is absent.

Events



EduStat University:

[Click here for more information](#)

The Educators' GPS: Using Data to Navigate Continuous Change

July 25 - 28
The University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia

Overview:

EduStat University 2010 brings together educators working to maximize their effectiveness in impacting student learning, even through times of relentless change. Please join us for this 3-day collaborative, working conference to share and improve your change-proof teaching and leadership practice.

Conference tracks include:

Principals/Teachers: Data Coach for School Teams. Workshops on using data to improve teaching and learning.

District Administrators: Breakout sessions on effective leadership practices resulting in dramatic systemic improvement.

Schoolnet Project Teams: Presentations on Schoolnet functionality and future product roadmap.

Confirmed Speakers (still in development):

- Dr. Arlene Ackerman, Superintendent, School District of Philadelphia
- Captain/Dr. Michael Barger, Co-Founder and Chief Learning Officer, JetBlue
- John Kayes, Former Chief Learning Officer, CIA (pictured)
- Charlotte Danielson, Education Consultant, The Danielson Group (pictured)



A selection of district case studies will be presented on districts' initiatives that leverage data for success.

Participants are eligible to receive Graduate Credit or ACT 48 credit for participation.





In The News



Confronting a Racial Achievement Gap

[VA Beach City Public Schools] Merrill and his board developed "Compass to 2015: A Strategic Plan for Student Success." [Read the full article](#)

(VA Beach City Public Schools uses Schoolnet to keep this important data in front of its educators and leadership team).

Software 'connecting' students, teachers, parents

"I've implemented a lot of programs here, and this [the Gradespeed Gradebook] was by far one of the easiest to roll out. And we have 2,500 teachers on it. After they put their information into the system, it's just a matter of walking them through how to use it and letting parents know how to log on," [Ricki James, SIS, Exec. Dir., Klein ISD] said. [Read the full article](#)

Finalist for Best Student Assessment Solution

Schoolnet is a Codie Award finalist for Schoolnet Assess, [Read more](#)

Tips & Tricks

Amy Cook, Schoolnet's Senior Instructional Designer, shares a few of her favorite tips. You can access all of Amy's Tips & Tricks anytime at the [Schoolnet.com Tips and Tricks Viewpoint](#):

Outreach Page Counter

Want to keep track of how many people are actually visiting your page? Add a Main (HTML) module and use the HTML view to paste in free HTML code, such as the one found here: <http://www.hitwebcounter.com/> I suggest hiding both the module and item title...[Read More](#)

View Benchmark Trends

In the Align Benchmark Trends Report, view up to six benchmark assessments side-by-side. The highest level standards aligned to the course are displayed so you can tell at a glance which standards have been assessed and how frequently. The number in the cell tells you how many students were at least proficient on that standard. For example, if your cut score for proficiency is 70%, a cell with an 82% means that 82% of the students got a 70% or higher on the question(s) covering that standard.

Some tips for navigating in the report:

- Click on a cell to view students names by score group
- Click on a standard to view by sub-standard
- Click the M icon to view related lessons and resources (if available)

Standard	Assessment 1	Assessment 2	Assessment 3	Assessment 4	Assessment 5	Assessment 6
2.1.1.1	82%	75%	80%	78%	85%	72%
2.1.1.2	78%	85%	70%	82%	75%	80%
2.1.1.3	80%	72%	88%	75%	82%	78%
2.1.1.4	75%	80%	78%	85%	72%	80%
2.1.1.5	82%	78%	85%	75%	80%	78%
2.1.1.6	78%	82%	75%	80%	78%	82%
2.1.1.7	85%	78%	82%	75%	80%	78%
2.1.1.8	72%	80%	78%	85%	75%	80%
2.1.1.9	80%	75%	82%	78%	85%	72%
2.1.1.10	78%	82%	75%	80%	78%	82%

Import "Clicker" Results

Are you using a Classroom Response System or other third party testing tool? With the Assess Classroom feature you can import results and immediately view them in Align. As of v10.5, teachers can bulk upload a file of classroom assessment data capture...[Read More](#)

(Version 11.0 to be released in June includes Easy Click: automatic clicker integration)





Product Spotlight from the:

Coming soon, educators and administrators can leverage exciting new tools to support achievement!



Create standards-aligned assessments easier and faster with Express Test. Select the standards to be assessed and the number of questions you want and Express Test will generate tests from your item bank – it's that simple!

Search for resource materials more effectively. Smart Search gives you resource recommendations based on:

- Upcoming assessments
- Upcoming instruction
- Recent assessment results
- Popularity



ASSESSMENT	ALL OF THE STUDENTS		PREDICTED PERFORMANCE										
	ALL OF THE STUDENTS	% CORRECT	NON-PROFICIENT	NOT PROFICIENT	PROFICIENT	PROFICIENT	PROFICIENT	PROFICIENT	PROFICIENT	PROFICIENT	PROFICIENT	PROFICIENT	PROFICIENT
GA School District	100	48.2%	10.0%	11.2%	16.8%	20.6%	17.2%	12.1%	5.8%	5.8%	5.8%	5.8%	40.4%
Clark County	101	45.7%	12.2%	3.2%	16.8%	16.8%	14.9%	3.4%	2.4%	1.1%	1.1%	1.1%	47.4%
Atlanta	83	44.2%	10.2%	1.2%	12.2%	10.2%	11.2%	1.2%	1.2%	1.2%	1.2%	1.2%	34.2%
DeKalb County	28	52.7%	42.7%	2.2%	2.2%	19.2%	19.2%	19.2%	19.2%	19.2%	19.2%	19.2%	31.2%
Fulton	21	58.1%	31.2%										
Spartanburg	1	55.2%											

Forecast future test performance with Performance Forecasting. Schoolnet now offers a forecasting tool to generate predictive scores for assessment administered through Assess.

Input grades and assessment results faster than ever with GradeSpeed* integration and Easy Click *clicker integration

Additional updates include:

- Redesigned materials pages
- Enhanced lesson planner and curriculum management
- More structured online assessment administration

Coming this Fall: Response to Intervention



Schoolnet will release Schoolnet RtI this Fall. RtI is a natural next step for Schoolnet. Schoolnet already enables districts to assess students, manage curriculum, and analyze data, all from one centralized location to be able to evaluate the needs of all students and quickly provide intervention to students who are falling behind.

Teachers will identify struggling students, create, track and manage intervention plans, capture progress monitoring assessment data and deliver detailed reports to all constituents.

Teachers will use standards-based assessment data to accurately diagnose the individual strengths and weaknesses of each child with an RtI plan to help target instruction. At the same time, parents will be engaged in a variety of ways, including the ability to log in and track progress online.





The Doyle Report: Technology and Education: Take Two

Technology and education standards, education standards and technology; does the word order make a difference? I'm convinced that it does; the emphasis should be on "education." Putting technology first risks misunderstanding the enterprise altogether. Technology is a tool, instrumental: education is purposeful, normative.

Technology is a way to do things – it is intrinsically neutral. It has no purpose in and of itself. It is given meaning by its assigned purpose: a knife can be used for war or peace, food preparation or to commit mayhem.

Writing, for example, appears to have emerged in ancient temples for the priests to keep track of tithes and to capture and "fix" the creation stories (myths we would call them today) ranging from Gilgamesh to the Greek Gods.

Indeed, an education/technology dichotomy is of long standing – Socrates (quoted by Plato in the Phaedra) argues that writing weakens the mind. No doubt Socrates enjoyed the irony of a written dialogue making his point (and ready to challenge it in a Socratic dialogue).

It took nearly 2000 years for the next big technology – Guttenberg's movable type – to appear (1450) and a century more for Jan Comenius's invention of the text book to begin to have an impact. And the impact was substantial, laying the foundation in the 19th century for mass education. Technology made it possible. And the emerging knowledge-based economy made it necessary.

(One of the profound ironies of the industrial revolution was "dumbing" down work, making it so simple and repetitive that anyone – not just skilled artisans – could do it.)

What does technology do for education besides making mass education possible? What it does for other areas of commerce – it offers unparalleled speed, accuracy and capacity, typically at greatly reduced cost. (Some technologies, like medical imaging – CT scans and PET scans, for example – are much more costly than the technologies they supersede – X-rays – but they do much more so are "worth" it.)

Indeed, the mass produced text book is a good metaphor for education technology generally; a "good" text book is a good thing to behold (woe that there are so few of them) just as a "bad" textbook is so disappointing. (The technology that produces them is indifferent. An inferior book is as easy to print as a superior one.) And just as the printed text book of Comenius replaced the illuminated manuscript, so too e-books will replace printed books. (And a second rate e-book is as easy to produce as a first rate one.)

In the education realm there are two broad technology streams: content and management applications. Content is the "stuff" of education – math, ELA, science and the like; it is all the things we must learn to be considered educated.. Management technologies include e-media – such things as computerized spread sheets, word processing packages and presentation programs – and accounting programs writ large (taking account of all the things that go on in the education realm), from tracking student or teacher performance to tracking attendance, school bus routes and Professional Development needs. (Put together in one place, it is what we at Schoolnet refer to as an IMS –Instructional Management Solution.)

And just as school buses are not dispatched at random, so too lesson plans, curriculum, standards and assessments should not be dispatched at random. They should all serve a higher purpose and answer the question "what should be learned," as distinct from answering the questions, "how" and "where" learning goes on. The "how" is described by the calendar and the clock, the "where" is described by the venue (or education's edifice complex as it is known.) In a rational world both the "how" and the "where" should be informed by the "what."

Indeed, in the world of practice – as distinct from policy – they already are. We now have an economy in which 40 million workers use computers every day and they are largely self-taught. They learned on the job (OJT in the jargon of the trade) for the job. That is an astonishing fact; autodidacticism rules the modern world.

Contrast schools, where cell phones are banned, and the work place where they are essential. What message does that send to students? It may be that as teachers and administrators develop the habit of using the PAD (a gloried cell phone) for "walk throughs" they will see a role for them "in" the classroom in students' hands. (Heaven knows students already do.) Indeed, that may account for Apple's creation of the iPad.

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www.schoolnet.com





About Us

Schoolnet is the national leader in data-driven instructional and professional development management for K-12 school districts. Schoolnet's GradeSpeed Gradebook Student Information System and award-winning Instructional Management Solutions (IMS) suite gives districts a group of integrated, web-based software tools to analyze district-to-classroom data, manage curriculum and benchmark test administration, communicate intra-district and with parents, and manage professional development.

Over 40 school districts of every size across the country, including Chicago Public Schools and The School District of Philadelphia, use Schoolnet's IMS successfully as part of their everyday educational process. Schoolnet has been recognized in Inc. Magazine's Top 500 List and in Deloitte's Fast 50 and as one of the fastest growing private companies.

The Schoolnet Team

Schoolnet has always valued input from our customers and we want to make sure that we have an open, honest dialogue about what works well, and what we can improve. For your reference, below is the list of our senior management team. Feel free to drop them a line about The Netter, at newsletter@schoolnet.com, or any other thoughts you might have about Schoolnet.

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