

# case study: Special Education Management



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### THE CLIENT

State Department of Education (SDE), Tennessee

### THE PROJECT

Statewide Student Management System (SSMS)

### THE CHALLENGE

The need for states to standardize and quickly move student data electronically has increased substantially in the last few years, as states have tried to keep up with the changing requirements of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and other federal and state statutes. Tennessee had a significant problem with inaccurate data – duplicate student data, in particular.

*“The process was so complicated. To work off the duplication errors took a tremendous amount of personnel time.”*

Dr. Timothy Webb  
Deputy Commissioner  
State Department of Education, Tennessee

Most state school district student information and special education systems don't collect the quality of information needed and don't collect data in a standardized format that can be readily aggregated at the state level to meet federal and state reporting requirements. School districts face serious penalties for bad data under NCLB and other statutes. Bad data also prevents effective corrective action.

### THE PCG APPROACH

In December 2003, PCG won the engagement to build Tennessee's statewide student data management system, combining its EasyIEP™ online special education management application with the Student Information component from our subcontractor partner Century Consultants. Along with SDE, PCG quickly began efforts to enroll school districts in the state-sponsored program.

In February 2004, PCG began implementing the EasyIEP™ and Student Information Management System components of the SSMS system. Some 120 school districts are now on the system, with the goal to ultimately have all 136 Tennessee districts enrolled. The program has been so successful that three of the state's largest districts – Memphis City Schools, Knox County Schools, and Hamilton County Schools (Chattanooga) – unexpectedly gave up their existing systems to join SSMS.

### THE RESULT

- Increased access to information: SSMS school districts report they can now easily access data and generate reports that were not available with previous student information systems.
- Improved financial decision making: SDE now receives more accurate information from SSMS districts from which to make state funding allocation decisions. SDE also provides more accurate data to the federal government to comply with NCLB.
- Greater efficiency: The single state-hosted system allows SDE to meet changing federal reporting requirements more simply and at lower cost.

*“We can make one-time changes to meet new reporting requirements quickly and easily. The state can make the changes, absorb those costs, and not pass them through to the districts.”*

Dr. Webb

*“EasyIEP is the best thing that has ever happened for Tennessee special education on the technology front.”*

Joe Fisher  
State Department of Education, Tennessee