Bridging Special Education and Instructional Management Data Systems

Case Study

The Client
Houston Independent School District

The Project
Bridging Special Education and Instructional Management Data Systems:
- EasyIEP™ Special Education Management System
- EdPlan™ Instructional Management System

The Opportunity

Houston Independent School District (HISD) sought an experienced partner to provide support for system improvements to the District's special education documentation process. In October 2010, Public Consulting Group (PCG) partnered with HISD to provide EasyIEP, PCG's web-based data management application, to document the Admission, Review and Dismissal (ARD)/Individualized Education Program (IEP) process for students in special education. Two years later, in Fall 2012, PCG expanded the partnership with HISD through EdPlan, an Instructional Management System (IMS) used by HISD for grades Pre K – 12. That same year, PCG worked collaboratively with HISD to design and implement a Full and Individual Evaluation (FIE) Writer module as an add-on to the EasyIEP system.

The PCG Approach

During the first three months of the project, PCG led a comprehensive business process review of HISD's special education program. In collaboration with a team of dedicated special education staff at HISD, PCG conducted this process review to identify existing program gaps and to determine the most effective way for leveraging best practices in EasyIEP's customized interface. As a result of the process review, PCG re-engineered the EasyIEP platform to align with federal, state, and HISD-specific best practices. PCG managed aggressive project deadlines and implemented the initial EasyIEP pilot in March, 2011. Within several weeks of the pilot's program launch, PCG had trained more than 300 users, these users were creating IEPs electronically via EasyIEP, and in turn, EasyIEP's compliance tracking capabilities were monitoring special education compliance. PCG continues to support and enhance the system today with day-to-day client support and project management.

Since August 2012, PCG has provided HISD with the EdPlan IMS Assessment and Reporting system for grades Pre K – 12. HISD currently uses EdPlan IMS to administer formative assessments using the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) Item Bank, as well as district assessments in all state tested subject areas.

In addition to creating training and support materials for HISD users, PCG has designed and delivered training sessions to district staff, including tailored trainings on assessments, reporting and overall system functionality. PCG is currently supporting HISD's push for district-wide online assessment administration.

The Result

PCG's five-year partnership with HISD has been one of collaboration and success, which demonstrates our ability to support large school districts through challenging, fast-pace, and large-scale implementation projects. Key PCG deliverables to date include:

- Implementing a web-based special education management system (EasyIEP) to replace HISD's paper-based system
- Piloting EasyIEP successfully across the district in less than five months
- Conducting business process review and customizing EasyIEP interface to follow the workflow requirements of the district
- Developing Texas compliant special education documents including, but not limited to, the ARD/IEP, Prior Written Notice, Notice of ARD/IEP, and Procedural Safeguards
- Integrating EasyIEP with the district's Student Information System, Chancery
- Designing and delivering EasyIEP training to HISD special education staff and administrators
- Providing EdPlan IMS training to HISD staff and administrators
- Supporting more than 6,800 users in the EasyIEP system

Due to the successful implementation of these two projects, PCG's partnership with HISD continued to expand. In 2013, PCG and HISD developed a Section 504 module as an add-on to the EasyIEP system. Most recently, PCG launched an Individual Service Plan (ISP) & Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) module, which is also supported via EasyIEP. As recently as 2015, HISD and PCG have begun collaborating on truly innovative tools such as an instant translation API for the district's bi-lingual families, which will be rolled out district wide before the end of the 2015-2016 school year.