CONQUERING THE STUDENT DATA MOUNTAIN "IN A SINGLE BOUND"

LITTLETON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Littleton, MA

Discovery of an All-in-One Solution

Northwest of Boston in the wooded Nashoba Valley lies Littleton, a quaint town with a history going back to the early 1700s. Today, the town's school district – as well as its leadership team – is vibrant and forward thinking, and they work to promote 21st-century skills and innovation in everything they do. Currently, they've been setting an example across the region of ways to use the power of technology to enhance teaching and learning.

Mike McEachern, Director of Technology for Littleton Public Schools, for years was faced with the challenge of conquering an endlessly growing mountain of student information. Managing a volcanic amount of data is one thing, but putting that data to work and utilizing it fully is another, McEachern explained. "Beyond the data of a traditional Student Information System (SIS), the needs of administrators, teachers and staff reach much higher," said McEachern. "Digital curriculum, special education, student health services and school-to-home communications all rely on accurate, easy-to-access data. Without that, a district like ours can't function well and with student success in mind."

> "You can do anything you want to do with Follett Aspen™, as long as you know what you want to do!"
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> **NATALIE BRANCH**
> Student Data Manager
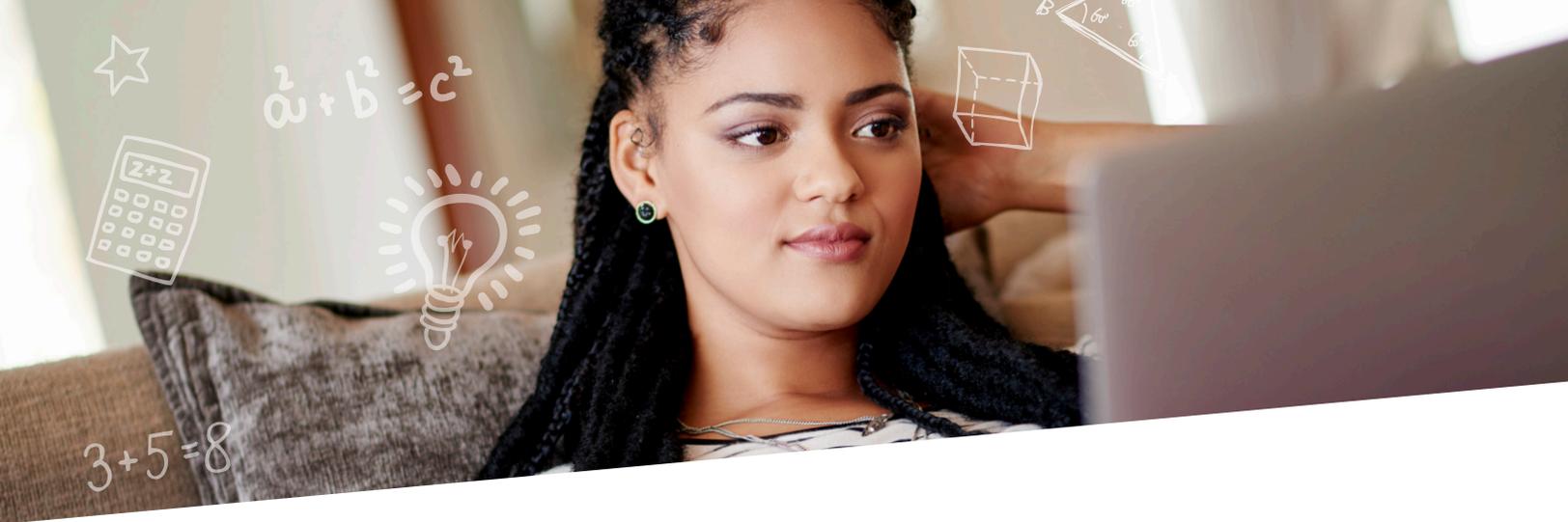
In 2011, McEachern and his staff – with support from Littleton District Superintendent Kelly Clenchy – formed a committee to find a state-of-the-art, all-in-one solution flexible enough to accommodate big needs. Yet, the new system needed to fit within the district's budget. After a lot of research, exploring a number of SIS programs and talking to other districts like theirs, the committee found a resource that worked for them.

"A neighboring district, Fitchburg, introduced us to Follett Aspen™," said McEachern. "We couldn't afford to pay for separate SIS, teacher gradebook and health management systems for our nurses. We needed an all-in-one solution. Learning that data of all types could be managed with Aspen showed us how we could do more and spend less. This return on investment was a major factor in our decision," said McEachern.

Aspen's affordability was just the beginning of the good news.

Across the district, the positive impact was felt almost immediately and has continued to unfold in unexpected ways. Many of the principals within the district didn't fully grasp the potential of a new system like Aspen and were initially overwhelmed by the possibilities. Now, they see Aspen's practical benefits for saving time on mundane tasks like printing report cards.

Keeping track of student needs had become incredibly complex for staff at Littleton. Quickly, they found how Aspen's scheduling module kept things much better organized and logical. Cross-functional teams at Littleton are now working together to build master schedules that actually work. According to McEachern, using Aspen has made everything simpler at Littleton. "Once you have the mindset and you get it, it's logical. It's easy to use. Once you go Aspen, you won't go back," he said.

Busy parents are also excited by how easy it is to find information about their students. Now they log on to one system for everything they need instead of trying to remember multiple logins. No longer do they have to sift through different systems searching for details to stay on top of their child's progress.

While implementing any new IT system requires patience and persistence, the switch to Aspen has been a smooth ascent and the views from the top of the data mountain are getting positive acclaim.

Thanks to the IT team at Littleton, the support of Superintendent Clenchy, and the vision of new heights for the use of technology, conquering that mountain of data is now doable. With the implementation of Aspen, staff at Littleton can use the power within that data to work smarter and help their students aim for success.
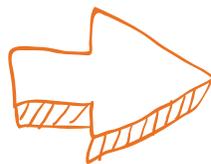
ABOUT FOLLETT

Follett is the partner that over half of America's school districts trust to help them manage everything from library resources and school assets to school data and information for data-driven decision making. Follett helps districts of all sizes track and use information and resources more efficiently so their dollars are best leveraged to help each and every student.

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