



CASE STUDY

ALIGNING THE WORK OF THE SCHOOLS, DISTRICT AND BOARD

ACCESS TO SYSTEM- AND SCHOOL- LEVEL DATA INCREASES TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY



USER

Barrow County Schools
Charter School System

of Students: 9,362

of Schools: 17



CHALLENGE

Align the work of schools with different governance boards at both the school and district levels.



SOLUTION

Simbli provides all stakeholders access to strategically aligned system- and school-level meetings, policies and action plans which are cascaded to the school level, as well as system- and school-based Balanced Scorecards containing performance data.

The Barrow County School System prides itself on continuously evaluating its purpose and beliefs to ensure alignment with student learning, and to keep a pulse on the effectiveness of the school system. Because the evaluation process includes input from a variety of internal and external stakeholders, transparency and accountability are paramount.

The process works like this: At least every five years, a broad-based group of stakeholders formally re-evaluates the vision, mission and belief statements. Once the Board of Education has approved the recommendation of the committee, which consists of business leaders, parents, staff and students, the superintendent and the executive cabinet cascade these expectations down through all levels of leadership to the students in the classroom.

In order to ensure transparency in governance and operations, Barrow County uses Simbli to help manage its Board of Education and local School Governance Team meetings, strategic plan, policies, evaluations, system news and calendars. Following are some examples of how Barrow County uses the integrated Simbli software to help ensure alignment across the entire school system.

STRATEGIC PLAN

Barrow County's strategic plan includes a Balanced Scorecard for both the system and school levels, with each school's Balanced Scorecard directly tied to overall system goals. The Balanced Scorecard helps them define, measure and monitor data in order to gain a holistic view of performance.

This data-driven approach helps them to be more confident in developing strategies to direct and improve student achievement. The disaggregated data is used to identify areas of deficiencies and ways to facilitate improvement. Central office staff members assist schools in the development of individual school plans, which are reviewed at least annually, and more often if the need arises.

Barrow County has highly qualified and experienced support personnel in place to help facilitate the system's expectations in support of student learning.

POLICIES

The Barrow County School System recently completed a thorough policy revision process. The system formed five separate committees that included board members, teachers and staff to review every policy for relevancy and alignment with the system's vision and mission. A systemic process has been adopted for more frequent reviews.

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EBOARDSOLUTIONS AWARD WINNER

2015

GSBA Exemplary
School Board

2012

1st Place Digital School
District Survey – Large District

Best Overall Use of Simbli
Best Use of Planning software

Best Use of
Evaluations software

2nd Place Best Use
of Meetings software

2011

Best Overall Use of Simbli

2nd Place Best Use
of Meetings software

2nd Place Best Use of
Planning software

2010

6th Place Digital School District
Survey – Medium District

Winner of Georgia Power
Governance Grant

MEETINGS

Board meetings, School Governance Team meetings and various departmental meetings are posted to Simbli, and each item of business is linked to a specific goal. Meeting minutes are posted publicly to provide further transparency for all stakeholders.



Members of the board and executive cabinet meet for an annual strategic planning retreat to review progress for meeting the system's goals, to establish expectations for student learning, and to determine how and which resources of personnel, money and materials may be available to support those needs and expectations. The mission, vision and beliefs are the driving force in those decisions and discussions.

EVALUATIONS

The board's self-assessment, superintendent's evaluation and leadership evaluations are processed privately through Simbli and linked to specific performance indicators and measurements.

GOVERNANCE TEAMS

School Governance Teams (SGTs) are comprised of the principal, teachers, community members, parents and students. The SGTs meet monthly to ensure that each school remains aligned with system goals and that all stakeholders are aware of current issues.

LEADERSHIP TEAMS

The annual Leadership Summit and monthly district leadership meetings provide opportunities for reinforcing the system message and enhancing effective leadership skills by focusing on results, building relationships and encouraging open communication.

"SIMBLI HAS BEEN INSTRUMENTAL IN OUR EFFORTS IN MANAGING, STREAMLINING AND ALIGNING THE WORK OF OUR DISTRICT AT BOTH THE SYSTEM AND SCHOOL LEVELS. IT IS OUR ONE-STOP COMMUNICATION TOOL!"

Dr. Wanda Creel, superintendent, Barrow County Schools