

Effectively Managing District-Wide Professional Learning

How Fairfax County Public Schools helps all employees take charge of their own professional learning



The Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) is the largest district in Virginia and has expanded in recent years to become the 10th largest school district in the nation, educating over 185,000 students each year. Fairfax County Public Schools is a high performing district, and the quality of the educational services provided is well known. It's not uncommon for families from surrounding counties to move into the district to ensure a seat for their children in one of the district's 196 schools. In addition, the county enjoys a stable job market, largely as a result of the strong government industry presence. Fairfax County is home to a multiethnic, multicultural population that continues to grow every year. Although the district continues to provide high quality education to its growing population of students, the budget hasn't grown at the same pace.

Managing the Data Beast

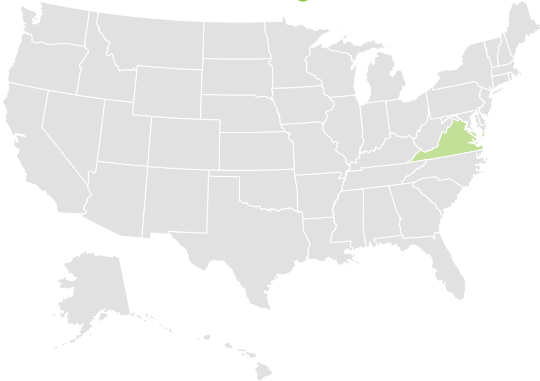
The district currently employs over 29,000 instructional, administrative, and support employees. Every district employee is encouraged to participate in professional learning that is specific to his or her role. Managing the sheer volume of learning opportunities, provided by a multitude of different departments and offices, is a challenge. The district needed an efficient and effective way to provide training, track completions, and help all employees take charge of their own professional learning.

The district's previous system for managing professional learning was inefficient and required administrators to scan documentation and manually enter data. "It was fragmented and very inconsistent, because when the person entering the data is not closely related to the person teaching the course, there will be a lot of inconsistencies," said D'Mitriy Pavlovskiy, Project Liaison, Talent Acquisition and Management at the district's Department of Human Resources. In a district the size of FCPS, this process wasn't feasible and lacked scalability. Teachers in particular struggled to ensure their training, which in many cases is tied directly to their licensure, was being recorded and tracked. Transcripts were

collected on paper, which could be misplaced and difficult to replace. The process had to be streamlined for efficiency, accuracy, and reliability.

School Stats

Fairfax County Public Schools, Falls Church Virginia



District Statistics:

SCHOOLS: 222	GRADES: K-12
STUDENTS: 185,541	SETTING: SUBURBAN
TEACHERS: 14,282	
NON-TEACHING STAFF: 15,467	

Making Every Minute Count

FCPS partnered with Performance Matters to build an integrated web-based professional learning platform for all district employees. By enabling single sign-on, users can log into the platform using one set of credentials and manage all their professional learning needs from one location. Course administrators from each department and office create face-to-face learning opportunities that are accessed and tracked through one system.

which in turn helps each department determine if their professional development hours and dollars are being spent wisely.

Every employee in the district has an account and uses the system to manage all their professional learning needs. As a result of streamlining its process, the district has saved time and become more efficient when it comes

“FCPS partnered with Performance Matters to build an integrated web-based platform through which each of the district’s full- and part-time employees could search for, manage, and track all professional learning, including key licensure training.”

Maribeth Luftglass | Assistant Superintendent of Information Technology, Fairfax County Public Schools

Completions display directly on each user’s personal transcript, and can be tracked through the multiple levels of reporting available through the system. Embedded surveys and rating tools allow teachers to document their initial impressions of the professional learning, and using the follow up survey, comment about its impact on classroom teaching and student learning. Departmental administrators have the ability to use these results to assess the effectiveness of each learning opportunity,

to professional learning by moving into the digital realm. The integrated platform provides “one-stop shopping” for courses, course ratings, surveys, transcript information, all of which impacts every facet of an educator’s growth cycle, from professional development plans to evaluations to observer calibration.

The district’s ultimate vision is to have professional learning support each employee’s evaluation, and they are actively encouraging teachers to make connections between professional learning and evaluation results. Professional development helps create better evaluations, and evaluations help determine the kinds of professional development that needs to be offered.

Performance Matters and Fairfax County Public Schools have become true partners in the process,

and the district has worked closely with the Performance Matters project team to ensure the system satisfies all state and local requirements. This collaboration has led to the creation of a flexible, responsive, adaptable tool that will grow and evolve as the district grows, ensuring the system will continue to meet the needs of all users.

