

**How Painesville City Local Schools
Built District and Counselor Capacity
to Expand the Reach of Their CCR
Programming**

Customer Story

Key Takeaways

The Problem: Frustrating CCR Platform

With the introduction of new state requirements, the district was frustrated with their former CCR platform that did not meet counselor needs nor adequately engage students.

The Solution: Lead By Example

Inspired by another district's overwhelmingly positive experience and success with SchoolLinks, the district eagerly adopted the comprehensive and dynamic SchoolLinks platform.

The Results: Cohesive CCR Engagement

By deploying SchoolLinks, the district found a trusted partner that is helping to ease the burdens of counselors, fuel student engagement, and nurture purposeful and meaningful college and career readiness within the district.



6 Schools



3.1k Students



1 yr with SchoolLinks



Cleveland, OH

The Problem

Additional State Requirements and a Frustrating CCR Platform that Could Not Meet Student or Counselor Needs

Painesville City Local Schools is a small district outside of Cleveland, Ohio. The district serves 3,100 students at three elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school. The area has seen steady growth over the past several years, yielding the biggest high school student population in many years. The district's high school employs a team of three counselors—each of whom follows a cohort of students throughout their high school tenure. In addition to the student caseloads,

the three counselors divide up the schoolwide responsibilities to ensure an even distribution of work. Starting in 2019, the state of Ohio began implementation of a new system of graduation protocols that included new reporting and documentation requirements for districts and schools. Much of the demands from this new system fell to school counselors to track, catalog, and ensure students were meeting interim benchmarks.

Painesville City Schools were utilizing a college and career readiness platform that they hoped would support their growing set of needs:

- 1** Improving student engagement and usage of a CCR platform. Specifically finding a platform that middle and high school students would enjoy using.
- 2** Using a platform that would evolve to meet the district's changing reporting needs, and provide counselors with opportunities to effectively support students.
- 3** Increasing the value added for students, teachers, or counselors from their previous CCR platform.

The Process

Painesville Eagerly Moved to a New Engaging and Comprehensive CCR Platform

During the 2021-22 school year, Sharon Fitzgerald, one of the three high school counselors, was at an education conference. While there, she heard another Ohio district excitedly present about an incredible CCR platform they had found that was transforming the district's approach to the new graduation reporting and tracking requirements.

The other district shared that SchoolLinks had made many of the work-intensive processes nearly automatic. They also described that the platform was interesting and intuitive for students, driving high rates of engagement and usage.

Fitzgerald immediately set up a call with SchoolLinks to discuss bringing the resource to her colleagues and students. As Painesville was grappling with how to meet the new state requirements, Fitzgerald was thrilled to hear all that SchoolLinks could offer her district. She was especially impressed with the collaborative nature of the SchoolLinks partnership and their willingness to personalize the support based on emerging needs.

In reflection, Fitzgerald explained that the district was not explicitly looking to change their platform, but the incredible benefits SchoolLinks provides for educators and students were too good to ignore. The district made the decision to implement SchoolLinks at the start of the following school year.

Fitzgerald, a thirty-year education veteran, openly admitted that change is hard for her. Through her career she has come to learn that the implementation of any new product or process takes upfront labor and requires a transition period. She described the process with SchoolLinks, however, as "seamless."

She applauded the SchoolLinks customer success team for the straightforward implementation guides and videos that she, a self-described "non-IT person," was able to use with ease and success. She also explained that, with SchoolLinks, once the setup is complete, it does not require constant maintenance or updates. As she interacted with the platform, she grew even more excited to unleash the power of SchoolLinks within her school.

The Result

An Exciting and Engaging Platform that Transformed the CCR Process

From the very onset of implementation, it was clear to Fitzgerald that the design of the SchoolLinks platform took into consideration all the various roles that counselors do to support school communities. Within weeks of initial deployment, the system streamlined many of the previously time-consuming tasks required for state reporting, to document that students have met graduation requirements, and for students to complete college applications.

In a district that struggled to get students using the previous CCR platform, counselors saw immediate

usage and enthusiasm for SchoolLinks. Fitzgerald shared that students have self-initiated exploring and utilizing many of the platform's features. She said it is evident that the student experience was at the core of the design and that the modern and user-friendly interface was inviting and easy to use for students. From doing an initial inventory of strengths, preferences, and goals and being matched with a celebrity who shares a similar profile to the unique college search features that provide more nuanced search fields, Fitzgerald explained that the students were immediately engaged with the platform and excited to use it.

Looking Forward: A Partnership Built on Trust Driving Purposeful and Meaningful College and Career Readiness

The high school is going to utilize SchoolLinks to facilitate their course selection process for the coming school year. Doing this will allow counselors to ensure that student course selections are aligned with their college and career readiness plans and goals.

The school has also decided to use SchoolLinks and its features to structure their sophomore year college and career readiness class. Teachers are using it to track progress on tasks designed to help students establish goals and explore post-secondary options.

Summary

Given the difference SchoolLinks has made in Painesville, Fitzgerald is eager to recommend the platform to colleagues in other districts who she knows would benefit from the functionality and partnership. She raved about the SchoolLinks customer service and their responsiveness and willingness to collaboratively problem solve. And, she continues to be in awe of the incredible engagement from students and staff and the overall success of the platform at her school. This trust in the quality of service and product has made Fitzgerald an evangelist for the transformative power SchoolLinks can have on a school community.

A Note From SchoolLinks

Supporting a wide range of district initiatives and complying with legislation changes doesn't have to be daunting. See for yourself with a personalized demo of SchoolLinks' modern platform and tell us how we can help you meet your district's goals.