

Inspiring Pathways for Student Success in Pennsylvania

How SchoolLinks Helps Dallastown Area School District Deliver on Its Core Mission



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Pathways for Success

Dallastown Area School District, located in southcentral Pennsylvania, operates with a simple yet profound mission that serves as a guiding principle embedded in everything the district does: inspiring and creating pathways for student success. Prominently featured on the district's homepage and reflected in its strategic priorities, that phrase captures a deeply held belief that college and career readiness (CCR) is not a program or an add-on—it is the central work of the district, from kindergarten through graduation.

With a graduating class of approximately 500 students, Dallastown has built a reputation for doing large-scale programming exceptionally well, bringing together a wealth of community partners, hosting district-wide events, and creating meaningful experiential learning opportunities that give students real exposure to career pathways. At the same time, the district is equally committed to the personalized experiences that help each individual student grow and discover where their strengths and interests can take them.

That commitment is evident in how broadly Dallastown defines student readiness. Whether a student is headed to a four-year university, entering the workforce, or taking a gap year, the district embraces every pathway equally, prioritizing that every graduate leaves equipped with the resources, awareness, and planning needed to confidently take their next step. Now in its second year with SchoolLinks, Dallastown is building on that foundation with a platform that matches the district's aspiration for both scale and personalization.

Streamlining Compliance and Staying Ahead of Reporting Requirements

Kellin McCullough, Dallastown's College and Career Coordinator, sits at the center of this work. Like many in her role, a significant portion of her responsibilities involve navigating Pennsylvania's layered compliance landscape. For grades 7–12, the district uses SchoolLinks to collect and manage artifacts required under two key state mandates: Future Ready PA, a statewide initiative that tracks student progress toward postsecondary preparedness across academic, career, and personal finance benchmarks; and Chapter 339, Pennsylvania's guidance and counseling framework, which requires districts to document that students are receiving comprehensive counseling support tied to their academic and career development.

Previously, managing these requirements meant pulling information from multiple sources and manually tracking what had and had not been completed. SchoolLinks has dramatically changed this process. Using the platform's Scope and Sequence feature, McCullough and her team can assign and track activities and lessons across grades 7–12, ensuring students are completing the right work at the right time. The district draws on both SchoolLinks' built-in resources and materials her team has created to meet district-specific needs.

From Cumbersome Spreadsheets to Two Clicks

The time savings have been significant. On the administrative side, McCullough's previous platform, Naviance, required downloading and distributing spreadsheets just to share basic progress data—a process that created bottlenecks and pulled her attention away from higher-value work. With SchoolLinks, the same information is accessible in two clicks. "From my end, as the person responsible—being that catch-all—it has saved me hours and hours of work," she reflected. The impact is felt not

just in her own workload, but in the reduced volume of questions and problems that used to flow back to her from staff navigating a more cumbersome system.

What has made the biggest operational difference, McCullough shared, is the platform's real-time analytics and tabular view. Rather than exporting data into yet another spreadsheet, the tabular view gives McCullough an instant, at-a-glance picture of who has completed what and what remains outstanding. This has provided a quick and clear way to stay on top of reporting across an entire student population. And when follow-up is needed, she does not have to track anyone down manually; SchoolLinks allows her to email students and parents who have not completed assignments directly from the platform. As McCullough put it, this functionality "has really helped with efficiency in my job."

A 98% Completion Rate Driven By Strong Stakeholder Engagement

SchoolLinks has produced results in Dallastown that speak for themselves. Most notably, the district achieved a 98% completion rate for its 11th grade class—a number that reflects more than just platform adoption. When asked what is driving that figure, McCullough is quick to point out that there is no single explanation. "I do not think it is just one thing," she said. "I think it is that triangle—students, teachers, and parents that have access." SchoolLinks has made it easy for students to understand exactly what they need to complete, given teachers an efficient way to monitor their students' progress, and brought parents into the loop in a meaningful way. The platform serves as the connective tissue—combining intuitive software with shared accountability across all three groups. McCullough added that the platform's clean, simple design plays a real role as well: students always know where to go and what to click, which removes friction and keeps completion rates high.

Overall, student usage tells a similarly compelling story. Because the previous platform did not offer

the same kind of analytics around student engagement, the district had no real sense of engagement or baseline to compare against. With SchoolLinks, however, the picture is clear: the district has logged 37,400 student logins so far this school year. "For a school our size, that is really, really good," she noted. But beyond the headline number, it is the depth of the analytics that McCullough finds most valuable. She can see in real time who is in the platform and what they are doing—whether a student was favoriting careers the night before or a teacher is actively using SchoolLinks in class that day. The ability to look at engagement patterns by day of the week or time of year has also become a meaningful planning tool, helping McCullough understand where student interest is concentrated, what is resonating, and where additional outreach or programming is needed.

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Targeted Events That Reach the Right Students—and Their Families

Dallastown has long prioritized large-scale college and career readiness programming, and SchoolLinks has become the engine that makes those events more organized, targeted, and effective. The district uses SchoolLinks' Event Scheduler to manage the full range of opportunities—from field trips and in-house speakers to college visits and community partner events—giving students a single place to discover what is coming up and easily sign up to attend.

What has made the biggest difference is the shift from broad, bulk advertising to targeted outreach driven by what students have already shared about their postsecondary plans in the platform. Through assessments and activities students complete in SchoolLinks, McCullough can identify and reach students based on their specific interests and goals. For instance, with a single click, she can message every student with an interest in healthcare to invite them to a relevant event. The same approach extends to families. When a student with an interest in automotive technology has a relevant opportunity available, McCullough can send that message to both the student

and their parent simultaneously. She explained: "We know, even at the high school level, that parents want to be involved. So when I can share that targeted information to not only the student, but the parent, we see our engagement go up."

Reminders and follow-up communications can be sent to registered students within just a couple of clicks, and the attendance feature gives McCullough an accurate picture of who is showing up and which events are resonating most—an invaluable tool for a district running programming at this scale.

The results have been significant and tangible. Event attendance has increased, and McCullough attributes this to several reinforcing factors: the ability to share information in a targeted, personalized way; students' existing familiarity and comfort with the platform, which makes finding and signing up for events effortless; and the reality that students who spend more time in SchoolLinks are seeing the events more often. What was once a process of broadcasting messages and hoping they landed has become a targeted, two-way communication system that connects the right students and families to the right opportunities at the right time.

Simplifying Scholarships and College Applications

The impact of SchoolLinks on students' college and scholarship exploration has been striking. So far this school year, students have logged 7,518 clicks on scholarships through the platform—a number McCullough describes as impressive given the district's size. Keeping that resource current is a shared effort: a district secretary inputs new scholarships into SchoolLinks on a daily basis, ensuring students always have access to the most relevant and up-to-date opportunities.

On the college application side, SchoolLinks' College Application Manager has become a foundational tool for Dallastown's school counselors. The platform creates a clear, transparent checklist for students that lays out exactly what needs to be done and when, removing ambiguity from a process that can otherwise feel overwhelming. Counselors particularly value the reassurance that comes with knowing when a document has been sent, received, and downloaded by a college—eliminating the back-and-forth that used to accompany that uncertainty. That transparency works in both directions, keeping counselors and students equally informed at every step.

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Managing bulk sends is similarly straightforward, making high-volume work feel manageable. Counselors also rely on the Track Results tab to monitor outcomes across their caseloads, and with 2,054 college applications sent so far this school year, the volume of work the platform is supporting is substantial. The district has even noticed colleges proactively reaching out to arrange representative visits—a development that reflects the growing visibility of Dallastown students in the college landscape. Looking ahead, the district plans to begin utilizing SchoolLinks' Future Ready tool in the coming year, adding another layer to an already robust college and career readiness program.

Expanding a Partnership Built on Results

When Dallastown made the switch from Naviance to SchoolLinks, the decision was not primarily about cost—the savings were not dramatic. It was about finding a platform that simply worked better. Two years in, that decision has paid off, and the district is now moving to expand SchoolLinks rather than simply maintain it. Next year, Dallastown will extend SchoolLinks to grades K–6, bringing the platform's career exploration and pathway-planning tools to students well before they reach middle school. That decision, McCullough noted, is itself a testament to how the platform has performed.

The expansion does not stop there. The district will also begin using SchoolLinks to track Act 158 artifacts—Pennsylvania's framework that requires students to demonstrate postsecondary readiness through evidence-based pathways and alternative assessments. Currently managed through a separate software, that work will migrate into SchoolLinks, consolidating yet another process into a single platform and replacing an additional tool in the process. This move reflects what SchoolLinks makes possible for a given district—a platform flexible enough to adapt to highly specific state compliance requirements in addition to general college and career readiness programming.

or McCullough, though, the case for SchoolLinks ultimately comes back to something straightforward. "SchoolLinks is wonderful because it's user friendly—on all sides. For the students and for counselors, teachers, and people like me." That ease of use is backed by customer support she describes as superior: her customer success representative knows her name, understands how Dallastown uses the platform, and responds with both speed and depth. The ongoing education SchoolLinks provides—monthly newsletters, webinars, and regular opportunities to go deeper with the platform—keeps her team growing in their use of

the tool even as the platform itself continues to evolve. At the end of the day, McCullough's measure of success is straightforward: "I am able to provide quality programming to our students, and SchoolLinks helps to facilitate that." With 98% completion rates, tens of thousands of student logins, thousands of college applications sent, and a K–12 expansion on the horizon, Dallastown Area School District is proof that the right platform—backed by the right support—can transform what college and career readiness looks like for every student, at every grade level.

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